

**G.W.F. Hegel**

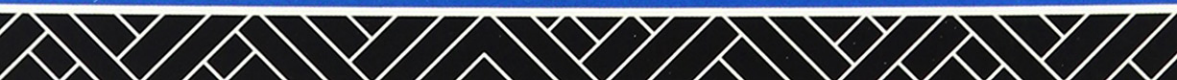
**Critical Assessments**

*Edited by*  
**Robert Stern**

**Volume I**  
**Nineteenth – Century Readings**

Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers

**ROUTLEDGE**









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**G. W. F. HEGEL**  
**Critical Assessments**

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**The Routledge Critical Assessments of  
Leading Philosophers**

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KARL MARX'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

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# **G. W. F. HEGEL**

## **Critical Assessments**

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**Edited by Robert Stern**

**VOLUME I**  
**Nineteenth-Century Readings**



**London and New York**

First published 1993  
by Routledge  
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

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Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Selection and editorial material © 1993 Routledge  
Individual chapters © 1993 the respective authors

Phototypeset in 10 on 12 point Times by Intype, London  
Printed in Great Britain by T J Press (Padstow) Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*  
G. W. F. Hegel/Robert Stern

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

1. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 1770–1831. I. Title: GWF Hegel. II. Title: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.  
B2948.G2 1993  
193—dc20  
92—42819

ISBN 0–415–07279–4 (vol. I)  
ISBN 0–415–02003–4 (Set)

Those who have gone beyond Hegel are like country people who must always give their address as *via* a larger city; thus the address in this case read – John Doe *via* Hegel

Søren Kierkegaard, 17 January 1838





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## Acknowledgements

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The contributions to this volume have been reproduced from the sources specified below. Where necessary permission to use the material has been obtained from the author and/or publisher.

Johann Amadeus Wendt, 'The first encyclopaedia article on Hegel', translated with an introduction by Clark Butler, *Clio*, 13 (1984), pp. 369–76

F. W. J. Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, translated with an introduction by Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, translated by David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 99–113, 267–82 and 291–7 (reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press, copyright © 1941, 1969)

Ludwig Feuerbach, 'Towards a critique of Hegel's philosophy', translated by Zawar Hanfi in *The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings of Ludwig Feuerbach* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 53–96 (copyright © 1972 by Zawar Hanfi; used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc.)

Bruno Bauer, *The Trumpet of the Last Judgment over Hegel the Atheist and Antichrist: An Ultimatum*, translated by Lawrence S. Stepelevich in Lawrence S. Stepelevich (ed.), *The Young Hegelians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 177–86 (reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Press)

Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State*, in *Marx: Early Writings*, translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton with an introduction by Lucio Colletti (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975),



pp. 106–29 (reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd and Random House Inc.; translation copyright © Rodney Livingstone, 1974)

Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, in *Marx: Early Writings*, translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton with an introduction by Lucio Colletti (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), pp. 379–400 (reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd and Random House Inc.; translation copyright © Gregor Benton, 1974)

Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg, *The Logical Question in Hegel's System*, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 5 (1871), pp. 349–59 and 6 (1872), pp. 82–93, 163–75 and 350–61; translated from *Die logische Frage in Hegels System* (Leipzig: F. A. Brochhaus, 1843), pp. 1–28

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# Preface

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Hegel's historical fate as a thinker has been curiously equivocal. On the one hand, he has been used and appropriated by many of the major intellectual movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (historicism, pragmatism, Marxism, existentialism, phenomenology, critical theory, political idealism), and his influence on a wide variety of philosophers, social theorists, historians, writers and even natural scientists has been acknowledged. On the other hand, very few indeed have accepted Hegel's philosophical *Weltbild* in its entirety, or been prepared to defend it as a whole, and most of his admirers have confined their interest and enthusiasm to isolated aspects of his thought, while remaining critical or dismissive of the rest. At the same time, opinions have differed over which of Hegel's ideas is the most valuable, and even over which of his writings is the most worthwhile. As a result, the living traditions that have used Hegel's philosophy (including those that have been dubbed 'neo-Hegelian') have often based themselves on particular elements of his work, at the expense of other areas. None the less, our present-day conception of Hegel's thought has grown out of these appropriations, no matter how one-sided, and cannot properly be separated from them; they form the context within which contemporary commentators deal with Hegel, and if one is to come to terms with the picture of Hegel that we have today, this story of his reception must be understood.

It is this feature of Hegel scholarship that has influenced the choice of material for this collection, and the plan of the volumes that make it up. The first volume, which covers the nineteenth century, contains pieces by a few of Hegel's immediate followers in Germany and by his first readers abroad, together with a selection of writings by his earliest critics the celebrated generation of younger thinkers (the so-called 'Young Hegelians') who began the process of dismantling and selective appropriation. The second volume, which is confined mostly to the twentieth century,

is devoted to those fresh readings of Hegel which occurred as a result of new developments in European thought and which led to a significant reappraisal of his work. The last two volumes contain current interpretations of all the central aspects of Hegel's philosophy, in which many of the issues raised in the previous volumes continue to be discussed and new approaches offered. Because of limitations of space and resources and on the availability of material, the collection makes no claims to be exhaustive in any of these areas: it is hoped, however, that by bringing together such a wide range of readings, this collection may throw light on the divergent ways that Hegel's thought has been assessed, and help demonstrate the lasting value and influence of Hegel's ideas for modern philosophy.

In an undertaking of this size, it is inevitable that many debts are incurred, and I have been very fortunate in receiving advice and help from friends and colleagues on all aspects of the collection, particularly from fellow members of the Hegel Society of Great Britain. I would especially like to thank the following for their considerable assistance: Richard Bellamy, Jens Brockmeier, Haydn Downey, H. S. Harris and Nick Walker. I must also thank my wife, Crosby, who provided invaluable support and encouragement throughout the period in which I struggled to bring this project to completion.



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## General introduction

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Robert Stern

It may be true, as Hegel claimed, that a great man condemns posterity to the necessity of explicating him;<sup>1</sup> but there can be few great philosophers of whom it can be said that interpreting them means ‘taking a stand on all the philosophical, political and religious problems of our century’.<sup>2</sup> Yet Merleau-Ponty’s claim is scarcely an exaggeration, as the range and importance of the papers brought together in this collection clearly testify. In this introduction, I will show that Hegel’s thought raises such fundamental questions because he stands at the centre of the debate between the Enlightenment and its critics across a wide range of issues, a debate that has dominated the development of philosophy (and intellectual life in general) since the nineteenth century. In what follows, I will attempt to draw out the way in which Hegel’s reputation and influence have been shaped by his ambiguous relationship to this debate, and to show that it is this feature of his thought that generates the main cruxes of Hegel interpretation.

What makes Hegel’s position so complex and many-sided is that while his thought contains aspects that appear to mark a break with the outlook of the eighteenth century, viewed as a whole he may better be seen as trying to take the Enlightenment further forward.<sup>3</sup> Thus, on the one hand, because Hegel understood and echoed some of the misgivings of the Romantics and the earlier thinkers of the *Sturm und Drang*, he is sometimes portrayed (especially in the English-speaking world) as a critic of the Enlightenment. On the other hand, he has also been seen (especially in Germany) as the highest expression of the ideals and ambitions of the *Aufklärer*, who attempted to bring their project to completion. Taken in isolation, however, both approaches are simplistic, for while Hegel was indeed an intellectual heir of the Enlightenment, within his work the outlook of the Age of Reason is also transformed and modified, yet in a way that sets him apart from the more radical

opponents of the *Aufklärung*. It is this tension that makes Hegel's true position so perilously hard to grasp, and why such divergent views of his work (and its problems) have emerged.

Certainly, there are several respects in which Hegel challenges the central convictions of the Enlightenment. The first, and perhaps most obvious, is Hegel's hostility to the eighteenth-century view of nature, typified in his constant vilification of its prime architect, Sir Isaac Newton. Thus, while Voltaire, that quintessentially Enlightenment figure, wrote of Newton that 'We are all his disciples now',<sup>4</sup> Hegel seems to have gained enormous satisfaction from demeaning him, declaring (for example) that 'the *ineptitude* and *incorrectness* of Newton's observations and experiments complement their *inanity*',<sup>5</sup> and that his theory of colour is guilty of 'monstrous error'.<sup>6</sup> Hegel's break with the Enlightenment conception of nature is also revealed in his antipathy to developments in other areas of science, particularly chemistry: like Goethe, Hegel voices scepticism about the claims of the French chemists to say anything very significant about organic nature, and in general deplores the reductionist and atomistic outlook that this branch of science seems to entail. On this basis, therefore, it is possible to see Hegel as part of a tradition of counter-Enlightenment thought, beginning with Romanticism and running on into the anti-scientism of today, which stands against the ever-increasing rise of mechanistic thinking in our culture, and which sees in modern science a *Weltanschauung* that is inimical to meaning, individuality and life.<sup>7</sup>

A second, and related, aspect of Hegel's thought that also runs counter to the spirit of the Enlightenment is the place he gives to religious experience in his work, epitomized in his claim that 'religion can exist very well without philosophy, but philosophy cannot exist without religion, which it rather encompasses in itself'.<sup>8</sup> It is argued that Hegel's aim was to reinterpret Christianity in the face of the growing secularism and atheism of the modern age, and to show that faith can withstand the critique of the *philosophes*. Thus, in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel is found arguing that only a crude form of religious belief need feel itself threatened by the Enlightenment; a more sophisticated religious consciousness can remain intact, and can find confirmation in philosophy.<sup>9</sup> 'The object of religion', Hegel declares, 'as well as of philosophy is eternal truth in its objectivity, God and nothing but God and the explication of God.'<sup>10</sup> Hegel, clearly, wanted no part in the absolute rejection of religious thought that emerges as part of the radical Enlightenment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Third, Hegel has often been identified as a counter-Enlightenment figure on the strength of his *historicism*. Hegel, like Herder, is credited with mounting a powerful challenge to the Enlightenment conviction that once unimportant cultural and historical differences are stripped off, there

is some uniform and basic set of goals, values and standards of reasoning shared by all civilizations and times, and that these can form the ahistorical foundation for a universal science of man. According to Herder, by contrast, 'There is not a man, a country, a people, a national history, a state, which resemble each other';<sup>11</sup> and Hegel would seem to share his belief, that far from being uniform, the outlook of each person and culture must be treated as being historically local and specific. Hegel's repudiation of the Enlightenment approach, again like Herder's, appears to have rested on his acceptance of a central historicist thesis, that 'human understanding is always a "captive" of its historical situation'.<sup>12</sup> In the following well-known remark, Hegel seems to be endorsing this thesis, by suggesting, against the *philosophes*, that it is not possible for any thinker to attain some absolute perspective, outside the local presuppositions, practices and cultural conditions in which they are embedded, and so to be certain that what they take to be rational and true in fact has transcultural and transhistorical validity: 'As far as the individual is concerned, each individual is in any case a *child of his time*; thus philosophy, too is *its own time comprehended in thoughts*. It is just as foolish to imagine that any philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as that an individual can overleap his own time or leap over Rhodes.'<sup>13</sup>

Fourth, and finally, Hegel's reputation as a critic of the Enlightenment derives from the way in which he criticizes eighteenth-century liberalism for misconstruing our capacity for autonomous action, and ignoring the social context in which this capacity can be exercised. A seminal (and influential) short statement of the Enlightenment ideal is to be found in Kant's essay, *An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'*, in which Kant argues that the dignity of the individual rests on their ability to decide for themselves how to act, and that individual conscience must take precedence over authority and tradition.<sup>14</sup> This conception of moral autonomy is closely tied to the values of integrity, independence and personal responsibility, all of which are important to Kant's moral individualism. It is often claimed that these are values that Hegel rejected. Hegel's ethical thought is distinctive in his repudiation of the modern emphasis on private conscience and individual moral judgment, and for his insistence that Kant's conception of the morally autonomous agent is both dangerous and wrong, constituting an illicit shift of moral sovereignty from the community and its traditions to the individual. In his *Natural Law* essay, Hegel makes the distinctiveness of his position clear, commenting that virtue is 'not an effort to achieve a private and separate ethical life . . . and that it is vain and inherently impossible to strive after a private positive ethical life. As regards ethical life, the saying of the wisest men of antiquity is alone true, that "to be ethical is to live in accordance with the ethics of one's country"'.<sup>15</sup> In thereby stressing the moral authority of society and its institutions, and challenging the assump-



tion that human beings are capable of freeing themselves from their social, moral and historical environment,<sup>16</sup> Hegel set himself at odds with one of the defining beliefs of the Enlightenment: that (as Diderot wrote in the *Encyclopédie*), 'L'homme est né pour penser de lui-même'.<sup>17</sup>

In all these aspects, therefore, it could be said that Hegel's thought represents a departure from the *Weltanschauung* of the enlightened thinkers of the eighteenth century. Sufficient motivation for this departure can be found in the set of concerns shared by most German intellectuals from the 1780s onwards, concerns which have been recently outlined as follows:

The Enlightenment's reign of reason had become a reign of death and destruction since the mechanistic methods of modern science, and the critical demands of modern philosophy, were heading straight toward atheism, fatalism, and anarchism. The more science advanced, the less room there seemed to be for freedom and God in the universe; and the more philosophy exercised its critical powers, the less authority could be claimed for the Bible and the old proofs of the existence of God, providence, and immortality. Thus the progress of the Enlightenment toward the close of the eighteenth century only seemed to vindicate Rousseau's damning indictment in the first *Discours*: the arts and sciences were not improving but corrupting morals.<sup>18</sup>

Like the first generation of counter-Enlightenment thinkers characterized by this outlook, Hegel and many of his contemporaries also felt that traditional meanings and beliefs were under threat, and that far from bringing progress and freedom, the Enlightenment offered disenchantment and doubt; there is therefore much *prima facie* plausibility in Alasdair MacIntyre's claim that 'the significance of Hegel's thought is that it . . . sums up the criticism of the Enlightenment'.<sup>19</sup>

And yet, this claim must be treated with caution, for while Hegel can be presented as a critic of the *Aufklärung* in these respects (and, indeed, at times presented himself as such), it is the *continuity* between Hegel and the Enlightenment that is more fundamental. If one examines the different aspects of Hegel's critique a little more closely, it becomes clear that his challenge is not so extreme as it might at first appear, and that to label him as a counter-Enlightenment thinker is to misunderstand his true position; for, as Benedetto Croce remarked, '[Hegel] did not simply reject the Enlightenment from which he too originated, but resolved it in a more profound and more complex rationalism'.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, although Hegel, along with many of the Romantics, distrusted the exaggerated claims made on behalf of Newton and the mechanistic model of nature he employed, he is far removed from the kind of hostility to science associated with its theistic, Romantic or irrationalist critics, then or now. Indeed, while one goal of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* is

to take science beyond the atomistic outlook of the eighteenth century via a critique of the categories it employed, the other is to render secure one of the highest claims of scientific rationalism, that the human mind is capable of explaining the whole of nature. To this end, Hegel speaks of nature 'as the system of unconscious thought, or, to use Schelling's expression, a petrified intelligence',<sup>21</sup> which it is our task and destiny to comprehend:

The love of truth, faith in the power of the mind, is the first condition in Philosophy. Man, because he is Mind, should and must deem himself worthy of the highest; he cannot think too highly of the greatness and power of his mind, and, with this belief, nothing will be so difficult and hard that it will not reveal itself to him. The Essence of the universe, at first hidden and concealed, has no power which can offer resistance to the search for knowledge; it has to lay itself open before the seeker – to set before his eyes and give for his enjoyment, its riches and its depths.<sup>22</sup>

Despite his hostility towards developments in contemporary physics and chemistry, therefore, there is no break with scientific rationalism in Hegel's work; in fact, there is a reinforcement of it, as in the face of growing scepticism, he tries to show that our knowledge of nature and its operations can enable us to bring our environment under our control by revealing its inherent rationality.

It might be said, however, that while Hegel endorsed the rationalistic ideals that underpinned the scientific revolution, he departs from the outlook of the Enlightenment by trying to subordinate empirical science to philosophy and *a priori* metaphysics, and so is at odds with the anti-metaphysical impetus of progressive eighteenth-century thought. However, a closer look at his position reveals that he did not deny the vital role of empirical investigation in our understanding of nature; he merely stressed that nothing we think of as science can be done in isolation from philosophy, in the sense that all empirical inquiry involves the use of particular categories in interpreting its results, and these categories (such as force, matter, cause, particle) can and should be subjected to philosophical scrutiny. It can be argued today that philosophy has an important and indispensable role to play in conceptualizing the mathematical and experimental results of the 'new physics', by providing a coherent metaphysical framework in which they can be understood, without thereby claiming to cast doubt on the methodology or conclusions of the working physicist; similarly, Hegel wished to argue for the indispensability of philosophy by challenging those who behaved as if science were 'innocent' of all metaphysical commitments and presuppositions. Thus, his main complaint against Newton and the Newtonians is that they refuse to

scrutinize their metaphysical categories, and assume (wrongly) that their conceptual assumptions are supported by experimental evidence.<sup>23</sup> In his introduction to the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel stresses that it is the role of philosophy to examine the categories that we apply in science and elsewhere, and it is this role that gives it its central importance:

The relation of speculative science to the other sciences may be stated in the following terms. It does not in the least neglect the empirical facts contained in the several sciences, but recognizes and adopts them: it appreciates and applies towards its own structure the universal element in these sciences, their laws and classifications: but besides all this, into the categories of science it introduces, and gives currency to, other categories. The difference, looked at in this way, is only a change of categories. Speculative Logic contains all previous Logic and Metaphysics: it preserves the same forms of thought, the same laws and objects – while at the same time remodelling and expanding them with wider categories.<sup>24</sup>

As this passage suggests, Hegel's unwillingness to abandon metaphysics stemmed, not from his desire to return to the methods of *a priori* rationalism, but from his recognition (which is surely correct) that science relies on *conceptualization* in order to construct its theories about the natural world, and the concepts that science uses in this way warrant investigation by the philosopher, to test their coherence and explanatory power.

Turning now to a further examination of Hegel's attitude to religion, while in part he sought to break with the outlook of the Enlightenment, there is none the less a high degree of continuity between their respective approaches. For, while Hegel does indeed distance himself from the extreme atheism of the French materialists, his rational and ethical approach to Christianity was directly influenced by the humanistic and rationalistic aims of the German *Aufklärer*. Thus, his refusal to declare war on religion in the manner of the Encyclopaedists should not be misinterpreted: it arose from his desire to treat religion in a rational and ethical manner, and not because he saw in it some impregnable element of irrational faith.

That Hegel's attitude to religion was basically enlightened is revealed most clearly in his hostility to Jacobi, who argued that rational theology was misguided, and that 'God cannot be known, but only believed. A God who could be known would be no God at all.'<sup>25</sup> Hegel was constantly critical of Jacobi's insistence on the need for a *salto mortale* into non-philosophy, and argued that Jacobi's position was based on an impoverished conception of the scope and nature of human reason. In one of the

preliminary chapters of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel clearly states his rejection of Jacobi's reliance on personal revelation and irrational faith:

The term *Faith* brings with it the special advantage of suggesting the faith of the Christian religion; it seems to include the Christian faith, or perhaps even to coincide with it; and thus [Jacobi's] Philosophy of Faith has a thoroughly orthodox and Christian look, on the strength of which it takes the liberty of uttering its arbitrary dicta with greater pretension and authority. But we must not let ourselves be deceived by the semblance surreptitiously secured by a merely verbal similarity. The two things are radically distinct. Firstly, the Christian faith comprises in it an authority of the Church: but the faith of Jacobi's philosophy has no other authority than that of a personal revelation. And, secondly, the Christian faith is a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine: while the scope of the philosophic faith is so utterly indefinite, that, while it has room for the faith of the Christian, it equally admits a belief in the divinity of the Dalai Lama, the ox, or the monkey – thus, so far as it goes, narrowing Deity down to its simplest terms, a 'Supreme Being'. Faith itself, taken in this professedly philosophical sense, is nothing but the sapless abstract of immediate knowledge – a purely formal category applicable to very different facts; and it ought never to be confused or identified with the spiritual fullness of Christian faith, whether we look at that faith in the heart of the believer and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or in the system of theological doctrine.<sup>26</sup>

Hegel's grounds for resisting Jacobi's account of faith are very similar to those offered by the rational theologians of the eighteenth century: namely, that it bases religion on immediate experience, and not on the 'system of knowledge and doctrine' which forms the rational basis for Christian belief, and that it takes religious authority away from the Church as an ethical institution, and gives supremacy to the individual believer, thereby depriving the Church of its social role. For Hegel, like many enlightened believers, faith alone is insufficient as a justification for religion, which only becomes supportable if it can be given a rationalistic warrant and a humanistic function in the ethical life of the community; it is this conviction that explains Hegel's hostility to Jacobi's position.

It is true, of course, that Hegel's attempt to find a rational basis for religion took a rather distinctive form. Hegel argued that the content of religion can be presented by philosophy in a rational manner, through the transformation of religious images and representations (*Vorstellungen*) into metaphysical categories, and the recuperation of the metaphors of religion into the language of philosophical thought. Thus, Hegel holds that we find in the Christian doctrine of the incarnation a pre-reflective

expression of the unity of the universal and individual, finite and infinite, as the figure of Christ represents this unity in concrete form, which consciousness later comes to grasp philosophically. Consequently, once it has divested faith and revealed religion of its 'picture thinking', and conceptualized it philosophically, consciousness no longer views the incarnation as incomprehensible, or closed to reason, but now sees in it the expression of a deep philosophical truth. In philosophically 'encompassing' religion in this way, Hegel was perhaps prepared to stick more closely to Christian doctrine than some of his predecessors: but the fact remains that, like them, he believed that there is nothing in religious thought that cannot be made compatible with our rational understanding of the world.

Hegel's ethical appropriation of religion is even more obviously in the spirit of the Enlightenment. Without, like Kant, trying to give the idea of God a central role in the *foundations* of ethics, Hegel none the less attempted to show how Christianity operates in the moral life of the community as a social institution. Using the Greek *polis* as an example, Hegel argues that religion can play an important part in underpinning the civic sense of the state, unifying its members around a shared set of beliefs, and acting as a vehicle for ethical instruction. However, following Rousseau, Hegel claims that historically Christianity has not functioned in this way, and has acted more as a socially divisive force, by becoming a merely private religion, based on individual conscience, introspection and worship of a transcendent God, with the result that it has encouraged the neglect of social and political obligations, and has undermined civic and communal ties. None the less, Hegel believed that while this tendency in Christianity would be encouraged by the sort of fideistic approach adopted by Jacobi, it can be surmounted, so that potentially Christianity could serve as a sort of *Volksreligion* or a Rousseauian *religion civile*, if its theological outlook were rationalized and humanized, and in particular if Jesus were seen as a prophet of *Sittlichkeit*. Thus, Hegel places considerable emphasis on the development of the Christian community and the ethical function of religious belief within the state,<sup>27</sup> and finds in religion not a source of personal salvation, but a way of integrating the individual into a higher form of social life.

Therefore, while Hegel is prepared to use religious imagery and terminology, and to attack the crude atheism and materialism of the French Enlightenment as a 'hubbub of vanity without a firm core',<sup>28</sup> his approach to religion reveals his underlying allegiance to the rationalistic theism of the eighteenth century, and his acceptance of its humanistic ideals. Despite Hegel's respect for the philosophical importance of Christianity, and for its social and political role, he was suspicious of all claims regarding transcendence, faith, revelation and the limitedness of man in his relation to God, as expressions of an 'unhappy consciousness' that has not yet properly understood its true place in the world: as a result, it

would be a mistake to claim that Hegel's attitude to religion reveals him to be a successor of the counter-Enlightenment.

It is also necessary to look again at the way in which Hegel's alleged *historicism* is supposed to have set him at odds with the Enlightenment. As Ernst Cassirer has pointed out, 'the common opinion' (which he disputes) 'that the eighteenth century was an "unhistorical" century . . . is . . . a battle cry coined by the Romantic Movement when it entered the field against the philosophy of the Enlightenment';<sup>29</sup> and Hegel, as an ally, if not a member of that movement, is often assumed to have taken up the cause of history against his predecessors in a similar way. However, as we shall see, historicism is a complex and many-sided doctrine, and in developing his version of it, Hegel shows that he retained an allegiance to the outlook of the previous century, which is not abandoned but *aufgehoben* within his conception of history.

We must begin by attempting to clarify what is meant by 'historicism' in this context. Writing about Vico, Isaiah Berlin has characterized historicism as

belief in the unique character and indispensability, and above all, validity at its own stage of development, of each of the phases through which mankind has passed and will pass; belief in an immaterial soul, with its immanent laws of growth, modified by external factors but not subject to mechanical causation; belief that men understand themselves and their own works in a different, and superior, sense to that in which they know the external world; the view that history is a humane study in some sense in which physics is not; finally, that the goals of men are set by Providence, and that their past and future are strictly governed by it, and much else of the same sort that they [Helvétius, Holbach, Condorcet and their followers] would have found wholly repugnant. In this sense Vico was a reactionary, a counter-revolutionary figure, opposed to the central stream of the Enlightenment. His hostility to Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and to all attempts to apply concepts and methods of the natural sciences to what is human in human affairs – which seemed to him tantamount to dehumanizing men – anticipated the position of Hamann and Herder and Burke, and the romantic movement.<sup>30</sup>

Setting aside any consideration of how far this accurately describes Vico's position, Berlin's characterization may serve as an outline of the central features of the kind of radical, anti-Enlightenment historicism with which Hegel is often associated. Three aspects of this historicism are particularly noteworthy: a desire to understand past cultures in their own terms, and a refusal to treat the current norms and standards of society as absolute; a vision of history that sees it as governed by some transcendent purpose;

and an insistence that the picture of human beings offered by the *Naturwissenschaften* is at odds with our *historical* nature, which it is the business of the *Geisteswissenschaften* to uncover. First, we must see how and why each of these claims goes against the central assumptions of the Enlightenment, and then we must examine the extent to which they played a role in Hegel's thinking.

The first feature of historicism which supposedly sets it apart from the Enlightenment is its sensitivity to the differences between past cultures and our own, its unwillingness to see historical periods as 'peaks of a single range of ascending human progress'<sup>31</sup> and its acknowledgement that human conduct and rationality may take many equally valid forms. Thus, it is argued, while an Enlightenment historian like Voltaire could declare that 'Morality is the same among all civilized nations',<sup>32</sup> and use the values of the eighteenth century as a basis for judgments about the past, for an historicist like Herder this was an anathema:

To conjure up in superhuman splendour a favourite people of the earth may well pass as fine poetry, and, as such, even prove useful, for man can be ennobled by a beautiful prejudice. But what if the poet should also be a historian, or a philosopher, as most pretend to be, modelling all centuries after the pattern of their time (a pattern frequently inadequate and feeble)? Hume, Voltaire, Robertson, classical twilight ghosts, what are you in the light of the truth?<sup>33</sup>

As a result of this willingness to see different cultures in their own terms, and this reluctance to use the Age of Reason as a standard against which to measure the achievements of all previous forms of human life, historicism has often been equated with relativism. For the historicist, as opposed to the enlightened rationalist, all values, standards, forms of rationality are said to be time-bound, so that while they might express the outlook of one particular period, they are unlikely to be applicable across history considered as a whole, and so should not be treated as absolute. Thus, on this view, 'the notion of absolute standards, moral, aesthetic, social, in terms of which the entire human past is largely a story of mistakes, crimes, deception – the very cornerstone of the outlook of the Enlightenment' is said to be 'absurd'.<sup>34</sup>

It therefore appears that this first feature of historicism does indeed represent a challenge to the assumptions of the *philosophes*, particularly if it is interpreted in its most relativistic form; and, clearly, if Hegel had shared this perspective, he would qualify as a radical critic of the Enlightenment. Yet, Hegel's position is in fact too moderate to warrant such an attribution. In particular, while Hegel shares Herder's emphasis on the need to treat different philosophical beliefs, religious conceptions, aesthetic ideals and political structures as products of the 'spirit of the



age', and avoids the kind of crude moralizing to be found in Voltaire, he is none the less notoriously willing to treat his own time as the final stage in the development of spirit, and to use his conception of the 'end of history' as a basis for ranking different historical civilizations, in a way that echoes the cultural confidence of the *philosophes*, and is a reinstatement of their belief in progress.<sup>35</sup> More importantly, Hegel never endorsed the slide into relativism which is associated with most extreme varieties of historicism: for while he accepted that each particular form of life must be understood in its own terms, using the method of 'immanent critique' it is none the less possible to reveal the inherent limitations pertaining to that form of life, and thus show how progress can be made by moving beyond it. Thus, without introducing some ahistorical, neutral standard in terms of which to judge different philosophical, religious, ethical, political and aesthetic conceptions, Hegel retains the belief that comparative evaluations between these conceptions are possible, through an assessment of their *internal* stability and coherence; and it is precisely because each successive outlook overcomes the limitations of its predecessors that Hegel can retain the rationalistic optimism of the Enlightenment, that absolute knowledge is attainable, and that one *Weltbild* might be reached from which no further progress can be made.<sup>36</sup>

The second feature of historicism, as characterized by Berlin, is of a vision of history as governed by some transcendent purpose: by Providence, or the 'living work of God'.<sup>37</sup> Once again, it appears, this conception of history is at odds with the spirit of the Enlightenment, which is distinctive for its commitment to *secularized* historical writing, which no longer sought to find evidence for divine intervention in the workings of the world. Thus, Voltaire was scornful of the tradition of historical thinking represented by Bossuet, whose *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* of 1681 had tried to explain the rise and fall of empires as the realization of a divine plan. As one commentator has observed, 'The hand of God, which, in Bossuet's universe, controls the destinies of men, is absent from the universe of Voltaire';<sup>38</sup> historicism, at least as exemplified by Vico and Herder, would seem closer to Bossuet's theistic picture, to which the Enlightenment as a whole is opposed.

Once again, assuming that this contrast between historicism and the Enlightenment is properly drawn, where should Hegel be located in this dispute? In much of what he says, and particularly in his Introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel would appear to be at odds with the naturalism of the eighteenth century by wanting to impute a divine purpose to history: 'Philosophy teaches us that no force can surpass the power of goodness or of God or prevent God's purposes from being realized; it shows us that God's will must prevail in the end, and that world history is nothing more than the plan of providence. The world is governed by God; and world history is the content

of his government and the execution of his plan.<sup>39</sup> Remarks of this sort seem to reveal a deep affinity between Hegel and other historicists like Vico and Herder, and to show that he shared in their unwillingness to adopt a purely naturalistic conception of history.

However, it would be wrong to read too much into Hegel's talk of Providence (or Vico's and Herder's, for that matter): far from showing that Hegel believed in some transcendent force governing human destiny, it merely shows that for him the 'cunning of reason' was operative in human affairs, whereby the intended actions of individuals have consequences far beyond their expectations, in such a way as to determine the course of history.<sup>40</sup> In this way, Hegel argues, it is possible for individuals to advance the progress of mankind and serve the general good, while only intending to further their own interests; he never claims that they are being caused to act by some transcendent being, or that what they do is moulded by some higher purposive tendency, of which they can never be aware. Thus, on closer inspection, Hegel's talk of Providence is no more sinister than Adam Smith's references to the operations of an economic 'invisible hand', and it would therefore be wrong to claim that Hegel is committed to a theocratic conception of history at odds with the outlook of the Enlightenment.

The third feature for which historicism is noted is its hostility towards the ahistorical model of human beings characteristic of the Enlightenment, and its new emphasis on the changeability and plasticity of human nature. It is claimed that by challenging the idea of a fixed human nature in this way, historicism undermined the central presupposition grounding one of the intellectual projects central to the eighteenth century: namely, the quest for a Newtonian science of man. A well-known statement articulating the basic assumptions of this quest is to be found in Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*:

It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions: The same events follow from the same causes . . . Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records of wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes

acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them. Nor are the earth, water, and other elements, examined by Aristotle, and Hippocrates, more like to those which at present lie under our observation than the men described by Polybius and Tacitus are to those who now govern the world.<sup>41</sup>

Whether or not Hume's actual position was as straightforward as this makes it appear,<sup>42</sup> the above passage has come to be seen as symptomatic of the unhistorical outlook of the Enlightenment, and the sentiments expressed in it have been the focus of much subsequent criticism from historicists, from Herder to Meinecke to Collingwood. Crucial to these thinkers has been the idea that far from being fixed, human nature is changeable and plastic, so that history cannot furnish the material for a 'science of man'; on the contrary, the role of history is to help us see how human nature is a 'pliant clay',<sup>43</sup> which obeys no general laws. In this way, it is argued, historicism offers a fundamental challenge to the positivism of the Enlightenment.

What, then, of Hegel's position on these matters? The following passage from his Introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* is clearly relevant here:

The expression 'human nature' is usually taken to represent something fixed and constant. Descriptions of human nature are meant to apply to all men, past and present . . . Once we have accepted this, we might even say that there is no need to refer to the great theatre of world history at all. According to the well known anecdote, Caesar found in a small municipality the same ambitions and activities he had encountered in the wider context of Rome. The same motives and aspirations can be found in a small town as in the great theatre of world events. It is obvious that this way of looking at history abstracts from the content and aims of human activity. Such sovereign disregard of the objective situation is particularly common among French and English writers, who describe their works as 'philosophical history'.<sup>44</sup>

Hegel, in common with other historicists, is here condemning as inadequate those who seek to explain human beings and their behaviour using an abstract view of individuals that is utterly general, that applies to all places and times. For him, it is argued, such an explanatory model is to be rejected because it irons out all the *differences* between belief systems, goals and attitudes that characterize the outlook of distinct peoples and epochs, which reveal forms of life that are highly divergent: in this sense, it can be said, Hegel is to be identified as an historicist critic of the Enlightenment, who rejected the eighteenth-century conception of the

past as excessively formalistic and uniformitarian. Equally, it can be claimed that Hegel abandoned the search for underlying principles of reason and behaviour, and so repudiated the attempt to construct a 'science of man', which can only deal in ahistorical abstractions.<sup>45</sup>

And yet, although Hegel may have refused to accept the Humean claim that the 'chief use' of history is 'to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature', Hegel's position is still far from radical. While not wishing to see history as a mere handmaiden to a Newtonian science of man, Hegel is more moderate than many later historicists (such as Dilthey and Collingwood), for he does not suggest that the latter is somehow eclipsed or done away with by historical thinking.<sup>46</sup> Hegel therefore departs from the Humean standpoint, not because he wishes to take the *Geisteswissenschaften* beyond the *Naturwissenschaften*, but because he sees a different purpose altogether for philosophical history from that envisaged by Hume: namely, to show that 'World history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom – a progress whose necessity it is our business to comprehend.'<sup>47</sup> Thus, although Hegel's position is orthogonal to that of Enlightenment positivism, it hardly constitutes a wholesale attack upon it.

Taken overall, therefore, Hegel's historicism does not mark such a radical break with the Enlightenment as is sometimes alleged. It is usually claimed that historicism constitutes a reaction against the eighteenth-century faith in reason, progress and science, and as such it has been described as 'one of the greatest spiritual revolutions which Western thought has experienced'.<sup>48</sup> Whatever the truth of this assertion as regards historicism in general, it must be judged an exaggeration in reference to Hegel: for the difference between Hegel and his Enlightenment predecessors is not so great as this suggests. As we have seen, there is little to substantiate the claim that for Hegel, historicism was part of a counter-Enlightenment development, for he never implied that reason and values were relative, or suggested that historical *Verstand* is the most fundamental form of human thought or experience; while in his emphasis on progress, freedom and absolute knowledge, Hegel's project remains continuous with that of the Age of Reason.

Finally, we must investigate how far Hegel's political philosophy sets him at odds with the liberal outlook of the Enlightenment. In place of the older, largely discredited, myth of Hegel as prophet of the authoritarian state, a new form of anti-Enlightenment thinking has recently been discerned in Hegel's approach, one which is closely associated with his supposed historicism: namely, his insistence that moral reasoning can only take place within the ethical traditions and norms of one's community, giving authority to the existing social customs and taking it away from the individual. This has seemed to imply that Hegel was a Romantic traditionalist, standing in opposition to the more enlightened Kantian

dictum: '*Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your *own* understanding!'<sup>49</sup> In contrast to this kind of critical self-emancipation typical of the *Aufklärung*, it is argued that Hegel was a deeply quietistic and conservative thinker, whose revulsion at the excesses of the Terror and hostility to the rationalism and universalism of the liberal tradition resulted in his emphasis on the social embeddedness of the individual, and his insistence on the authority of the given forms of ethical life. Thus, whereas formerly Hegel's opposition to liberalism was said to stem from his peculiarly Prussian love of the state, it is now said to arise from his historicist and communitarian conception of moral philosophy, one which makes it hard for the individual to challenge and alter the local political morality in which they are rooted.<sup>50</sup>

This is to misinterpret Hegel's position, however.<sup>51</sup> First, Hegel's prioritization of *Sittlichkeit* over *Moralität* should not be confused with a conservative reverence for tradition: on the contrary, in the spirit of 1789, Hegel declared that reason, not authority, was the foundation of modern society,<sup>52</sup> and he is clearly a rationalist in his framing of the constitution of the state.<sup>53</sup> Second, Hegel does not deny that when the existing social framework has been corrupted, when individuals find themselves in a state that is 'hollow, spiritless and unsettled', then the individual (like Socrates) may retreat 'into himself in search of the right and the good':<sup>54</sup>

The self-consciousness which has managed to attain this absolute reflection into itself knows itself in this reflection as a consciousness which cannot and should not be compromised by any present and given determination. In the shapes which it more commonly assumes in history (as in the case of Socrates, the Stoics, etc.), the tendency to look *inwards* into the self and to know and determine from within the self what is right and good appears in epochs when what is recognized as right and good in actuality and custom is unable to satisfy the better will. When the existing world of freedom has become unfaithful to the better will, this will no longer finds itself in the duties recognized in the world and must seek to recover in ideal inwardness alone that harmony which it has lost in actuality. Once self-consciousness has grasped and acquired its formal right in this way, everything depends on the kind of content which it gives to itself.<sup>55</sup>

As this passage indicates, Hegel was not seeking to endorse the ultra-conservative view that the attitude of citizens must always be passive subservience to the state. On the contrary, only when society conforms to a certain rational and moral ideal, when it is 'a state with good laws',<sup>56</sup> should the individual accept the form of ethical life that is embodied within the social structure. Hegel's aim is to create such a social structure, not in order to undermine the authority of the individual, but to ensure

that we do not have to become like Socrates (or Jesus Christ) and suffer a conscience that is at odds with the political framework in which we are embedded. Thus, as Charles Taylor has observed, 'it is ludicrous to attribute a view like "my government right or wrong" to Hegel',<sup>57</sup> or to claim that he was a political anti-rationalist, and opposed to the political theorizing of the Enlightenment.

It therefore turns out that on closer inspection, it is misleading to claim that Hegel rejected the values, ambitions or outlook of the Enlightenment in any substantial sense, and that it would be wrong to classify him as part of that 'reaction of the nineteenth century against the eighteenth' which Mill took to be typical of Continental thought.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps it is closest to the truth to say that Hegel was an Enlightenment thinker of the second generation, rather than the first: while still standing by its positive aspects – its stress on reason and autonomy, its opposition to religious and political tyranny – he was more aware than the original *Aufklärer* and *philosophes* that this 'new world'<sup>59</sup> also has a darker side, lacking the stability, certainties and 'enchantments' of the old. However, despite this recognition, Hegel remains a modernist, who retained his trust in a future shaped by the progressive ideals of the eighteenth century, ideals which he never repudiated, but which he sought to work through for a more fearful and troubled time.

## Notes

1 G. W. F. Hegel, 'Notizen und Aphorismen 1818–1831', in *Berliner Schriften 1818–1831, Theorie Werkausgabe*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Klaus Markus Michel, 20 vols and index (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969–71), XI, p. 574.

2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Hegel's existentialism', reprinted below, Volume II, pp. 426–33, p. 426.

3 For a finely balanced analysis of Hegel's relationship to the Enlightenment, see Jürgen Habermas' discussion of Hegel in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, translated by Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), pp. 23–44.

4 Voltaire, to the Académie française, in *Œuvres complètes*, 52 vols (Paris: Garnier, 1877–85), VII, p. 335.

5 Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, translated by Michael John Petry, 3 vols (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), §320, II, p. 139.

6 *ibid.*, §320 Z, p. 143.

7 Hegel was especially concerned to stop the use of mechanistic paradigms dominating our conception of the human world, particularly our model of the state, arguing instead for a more organic picture. See, for example, Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, edited by Allen W. Wood and translated by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), §269 Z, p. 290.

8 Hegel, Preface to the second edition of the *Logic. Theorie Werkausgabe*, VIII, p. 24.

9 See Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 335–7.

10 Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, translated by E. B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson, 3 vols, reprint edn (New York: Humanities Press, 1974), I, p. 19.

11 J. G. Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, edited by Bernhard Suphan, 33 vols (Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1877–1913), IV, p. 472; cited Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (London: Fontana Press, 1991), p. 84.

12 Robert D'Amico, *Historicism and Knowledge* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), p. x.

13 Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Preface, pp. 21–2.

14 Immanuel Kant, *An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss and translated by H. B. Nisbet, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 54–60.

15 Hegel, *Natural Law*, translated by T. M. Knox with an Introduction by H. B. Acton (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), p. 115. This passage is cited to great effect by F. H. Bradley as part of his attack on individualism and his critique of Kant: see *Ethical Studies*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 173.

16 Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, translated by H. B. Nisbet with an Introduction by Duncan Forbes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 81: 'Each individual is the son of his own nation at a specific stage in this nation's development. No one can escape from the spirit of his nation, any more than he can escape from the earth itself.'

17 Cited in Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 323.

18 Fredrick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 1–2.

19 Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity* (London: Duckworth, 1968), p. 7.

20 Benedetto Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty*, translated by Sylvia Sprigge (Chicago: Gateway, 1970), p. 71; translation modified.

21 Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), §24 Z, p. 37. Wallace traces the reference to Schelling back to a poem published in the *Zeitschrift für spekulative Physik*, 1800 (see *ibid.*, p. 304). In his later work, Schelling was extremely critical of precisely the kind of rationalism that this remark implies, and which he found in Hegel: see below, pp. 40–67.

22 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson, 3 vols (London: Routledge, 1892–6), I, p. xiii.

23 Thus, Hegel remarks of Newton's theory of light: 'The conception of aggregations of discrete and simple light-rays and particles, out of which a light which is limited in its diffusion is supposed to arise, belong to the barbarous categories which have continued to dominate physics, since Newton made them current' (Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, §276, II, pp. 17–18). For a well-balanced analysis of Hegel's attitude to Newton and Newtonianism, see M. J. Petry, 'Hegel's criticism of Newton', reprinted below, Vol. IV, pp. 52–68.

24 Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §9, p. 13.

25 F. H. Jacobi, *Open Letter to Fichte*, in Ernst Behler (ed.) *Philosophy of German Idealism* (New York: Continuum, 1987), pp. 119–41, p. 121.

26 Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §63, pp. 98–9.

27 'In the Protestant state, the constitution and the code, as well as their



several applications, embody the principle and the development of the moral life, which proceeds and can only proceed from the truth of religion, when reinstated in its original principle and in that way as such first become actual. The moral life of the state and the religious spirituality of the state are thus reciprocal guarantees of strength.' Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind: Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), §552, p. 291.

28 Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, translated by Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), p. 56.

29 Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 197. Cf. John Stuart Mill, *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge*, with an Introduction by F. R. Leavis (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), p. 130: 'The disrespect in which history was held by the *philosophes* is notorious; one of the soberest of them, D'Alembert we believe, was the author of the wish that all record whatever of past events could be blotted out. And indeed the ordinary mode of writing history, and the ordinary mode of drawing lessons from it, were almost sufficient to excuse this contempt. But the *philosophes* saw, as usual, what was not true, not what was.'

30 Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder* (London: The Hogarth Press), p. 72.

31 *ibid.*, p. 139.

32 Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs, Œuvres complètes*, XI, p. 54.

33 J. G. Herder, *Yet Another Philosophy of History*, in *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, translated by F. M. Barnard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 185.

34 Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, p. 41. Cf. Geoffrey Barraclough, 'The historian in a changing world', in Hans Meyerhoff (ed.), *The Philosophy of History in Our Time* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), pp. 28–35, p. 30. 'That historicism is the progenitor of relativism, is too obvious a fact to require demonstration. Everything is related, judged and evaluated in relation – and far too often solely in relation – to time, place, context and environment; there are no absolutes.'

35 Herder's scornful attitude to the idea of progress is well illustrated in the following passage: 'To assume that human destiny is forever marching forward in giant steps; to believe that depravity is a necessary pre-condition for improvement and order; to argue that there must be shadow in order that there be light, that to unravel the knot of events it must first be tied, that, to produce a clear nectar, fermentation must first remove the impurities: this seems to me to be the corollary of our century's pet philosophy . . . What a beautiful portrayal of the natural order and progress in all things we owe to our brilliant philosophers!' (Herder, *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, p. 194).

36 Hegel's position should therefore be contrasted with that of an historicist like Dilthey, for whom no such all-encompassing finality is conceivable: 'world views are grounded in the nature of the universe and in the relationship between the finite perceptive mind and the universe. Thus each world-view expresses within its limitations one aspect of the universe. In this respect each is true. Each, however, is one-sided. To contemplate all the aspects in their totality is denied to us. We see the pure light of truth only in various broken rays' (Wilhelm Dilthey, 'The dream', in Meyerhoff (ed.), *The Philosophy of History in Our Time*, pp. 37–43, p. 41).

37 Herder, *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, p. 217.

38 J. H. Bumfritt, *Voltaire: Historian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 32.

39 Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, p. 67.

40 See *ibid.*, pp. 74–5.

41 David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 3rd edn, edited by Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), section VIII, Part I, pp. 83–4. Cf. D'Alembert, *Eléments de philosophie*, section III: 'For the average reader, history is only so much food for curiosity or it is simply a momentary escape from boredom; for the philosopher it is a collection of intellectual and moral experiments (*expériences morales*) on the human race. It is a collection which would be more complete if it had been assembled by the wise alone; yet, incomplete as it is, it still contains the greatest teachings, such for instance as the accumulation of medical observations of all times, which, though it is constantly being enlarged and always remains incomplete, constitutes nonetheless the main body of medical science' (cited in Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 225).

42 For qualifications on this score, see Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 102–24.

43 Herder, *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, p. 185.

44 Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, pp. 44–5.

45 'If we think away everything that someone's obscure inkling may reckon amongst the particular and the transitory as belonging to particular manners, to history, to civilization, and even to the state, then what remains is man in the image of the bare state of nature, or the abstraction of man with his essential potentialities; and we have only to look in order to find what is necessary . . . Now in this separation empiricism lacks in the first place all criteria for drawing the boundary between the accidental and the necessary; i.e., for determining what in the chaos of the state of nature or in the abstraction of man must remain and what must be discarded' (Hegel, *Natural Law*, pp. 63–4).

46 Cf. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 205–31.

47 Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, p. 54.

48 Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (Munich: Oldenburgh, 1936), p. 1.

49 Kant, 'What is Enlightenment?', p. 54.

50 Hegel's critique of Kant's ethics has had an acknowledged influence on the communitarian turn in recent moral and political philosophy which is associated with the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel and Michael Walzer (amongst others).

51 Cf. Allen W. Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 207: 'Some of Hegel's general pronouncements sound like Romantic protests against the Enlightenment's tendency to modernize institutions, leveling customs and traditions, recasting all constitutions according to a single rationalistic model. But he is a false friend to Romanticism, just as he is to Prussian absolutism and to Christian orthodoxy. Hegel's own account of modern ethical life actually represents only a new, historicized version of that same aggressive, modernizing rationalism.'

52 'That faculty which man can call his own, elevated above death and decay . . . is able to make decisions of itself. It announces itself as reason. Its law-making depends on nothing else, nor can it take its standards from any other authority on earth or in heaven' (Hegel, *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*, edited by Herman Nohl (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907), p. 89).

53 'In recent times, we have heard an endless amount of empty talk about the constitution and about reason itself. The most vapid of this has come from those

in Germany who have persuaded themselves that they have a better understanding than anyone else – especially governments – of what a constitution is, and who believe that all their superficialities are irrefutably justified because they are allegedly based on religion and piety. It is no wonder that such talk has made reasonable men [*Männer*] sick of the words “reason”, “enlightenment”, “right”, etc., and likewise of the words “constitution” and “freedom”, and that one is almost ashamed to enter into any further discussion of political constitutions. But it may at least be hoped that such excesses will lead to a more widespread conviction that philosophical *cognition* of such subjects cannot come from ratiocination or from [the consideration of] ends, grounds, and utilities – let alone from emotionality, love, and enthusiasm – but only from the concept; and it is also to be hoped that those who believe that the divine is incomprehensible and that cognition of the truth is a futile [*nichtiges*] enterprise will take no further part in the discussion. At any rate, neither the undigested chatter nor the edifying sentiments which their emotions and enthusiasm generate can claim to merit the attention of philosophy’ (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §272, pp. 305–6).

54 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §138, p. 167.

55 *ibid.*, §138, p. 166.

56 *ibid.*, §153, p. 196.

57 Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 377.

58 J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, edited with an Introduction by John M. Robson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 130.

59 Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 7.

## Introduction

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Robert Stern

The assessment of Hegel's thought, even today, is dominated by its nineteenth-century reception. Although more recent scholarly and intellectual developments have led to different (and more differentiated) approaches, the same interpretative disputes are raised, the same philosophical criticisms are echoed, and Hegel is still often evaluated in the same terms as were advanced in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the decisive period is even narrower than this: it can almost be said that what was written about Hegel between 1840 and 1860 forms the starting point for all subsequent interpretations of his work. Of the pieces contained in this volume, the most influential were composed in this period, and it is from them that any appreciation of Hegel's *Wirkungsgeschichte* must begin.

Ironically enough, these important readings did not come from disciples or orthodox followers of Hegel, but from those who accused him of political quietism and 'rational mysticism',<sup>1</sup> and so sought to repudiate Hegelianism, either in whole or in part; and the influence of Feuerbach, Marx and Kierkegaard, and (to a lesser extent) of Schelling, Trendelenburg and Haym, has meant that Hegel's thought continues to be debated in these terms. In what follows, therefore, I will offer a general account of the questions raised by these influential critics of Hegel's work, beginning with their attack on his metaphysics.

At the heart of Hegel's metaphysical position, in a way that is greatly emphasized by Feuerbach and Marx, is the claim that the structure of speculative thinking or reason is identical with the structure of ultimate reality or being. Hegel's purpose in fusing logic and ontology in this way was to move beyond Kant's merely subjective idealism, for which 'thoughts . . . are *only our* thoughts – separated by an impassable gulf from the thing, as it exists apart from our knowledge',<sup>2</sup> and to establish his own objective idealism, according to which 'Everything is in *one*

totality only: the objective totality and the subjective totality, the system of nature and the system of intelligence are one and the same.'<sup>3</sup> He therefore argues for a strongly idealistic metaphysics, more classical than post-Cartesian,<sup>4</sup> which states that the material world is informed by ideal structures (such as laws and natural kinds) that are intelligible only to the intellect; these structures bring order and unity to reality, and it is by thinking in these terms that our particular experiences come to have some coherence. As Hegel puts it: 'A thought is the universal as such; even in nature we find thoughts present as its species and laws, and thus they are not merely present in the form of consciousness, but absolutely and therefore objectively. The reason of the world is not subjective reason.'<sup>5</sup>

While this form of objective idealism was a positive influence on Feuerbach's early work, he quickly became one of its most influential critics, with the publication of his essay 'Towards a critique of Hegel's philosophy', published in Arnold Ruge's *Hallische Jahrbücher* in 1839.<sup>6</sup> In this essay, Feuerbach accuses Hegel of dissembling: while he pretends that his dialectical critique treats all philosophical positions even-handedly, and that idealism emerges victorious from a process of objective investigation, in fact Hegel 'was convinced of the certainty of the Absolute Idea' from the start, so that 'there was nothing of the critic or the sceptic in him'<sup>7</sup> when it came to his treatment of idealism. Feuerbach therefore argues that Hegel never really *demonstrates* his claim that 'thought is the constitutive substance of external things',<sup>8</sup> and his case against nominalism and materialism is unproven:

What if [Hegel's opponent] says instead, 'Your indeterminate and pure being is just an abstraction to which nothing real corresponds, for real is only real being? Or else prove if you can the reality of *general* notions!' Do we not thus come to those general questions that touch upon the truth and reality not only of Hegel's *Logic* but also of philosophy altogether? Is the *Logic* above the dispute between the Nominalists and Realists (to use old names for what are natural contraries)? Does it not contradict in its first notions sense perception and its advocate, the intellect? Have they no right to oppose the *Logic*? The *Logic* may well dismiss the voice of sense perception, but, then, the *Logic* itself is dismissed by the intellect on the ground that it is like a judge who is trying his own case.<sup>9</sup>

To reinforce his point, Feuerbach refers in some detail to one of the most celebrated passages in Hegel's writings, his discussion of sense-certainty in the opening section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Here, Hegel tries to show how consciousness must move beyond the empty 'given' of pure sense-experience, and begin to acknowledge universals in

its conception of the world. Echoing the Platonic doctrine that things as we perceive them are too shifting and changeable to be proper objects of knowledge, Hegel expresses the hope that this dialectic of sense-certainty will have succeeded in undermining the 'astonishing' philosophical proposition 'that the reality or being of external things taken as Theses or sense objects has absolute truth for consciousness'.<sup>10</sup> In the course of the dialectic, therefore, consciousness' initial faith in the pure being of the individual sense-object is supposed to give way to a preliminary acknowledgement that the true, permanent basis of experience is the universal.<sup>11</sup>

In response, Feuerbach once again insists that Hegel's case is not proven, as the latter does not succeed in showing that the object of consciousness is in fact a universal, and not a particular. Against Hegel's apparent Platonism, Feuerbach reiterates the case for nominalism, by arguing that universals are merely concepts that we employ, which do not serve to pick out anything over and above the concrete individuals themselves:

But is this a dialectical refutation of the reality of sensuous consciousness? Is it thereby proved that the general is the real? It may well be for someone who is certain in advance that the general is the real, but not for sensuous consciousness or for those who occupy its standpoint and will have to be convinced first of the unreality of sensuous being and the reality of thought. My brother is called John, or, if you like, Adolph, but there are innumerable people besides him who are called by the same name. Does it follow from this that my brother John is not real? Or that Johnness is the truth? To sensuous consciousness, all words are names – *nomina propria*.<sup>12</sup>

According to Feuerbach, therefore, Hegel fails to show that individuals are constituted by universals,<sup>13</sup> as his account of sense-certainty merely demonstrates the role that concepts have in *our* thinking about the world; but, from this we cannot conclude anything about the *reality* of these concepts, unless we assume what was meant to be proven, that the world is constituted by thought. Feuerbach claims that it is this initial *assumption* of idealism that vitiates Hegel's whole position.

This nominalist attack on Hegel has exerted great influence, and it marks the beginning of a turn away from idealism in nineteenth-century thought, and towards a new materialist metaphysics and empiricist epistemology. Hegel's followers tried to respond to this new wave of anti-idealist thought, and some, like his biographer Karl Rosenkranz, insisted in vain that Hegel was not a Platonist, to be 'reproached with offering up the world of blooming life to idea as to a desolate Hades';<sup>14</sup> on the contrary, Rosenkranz argued, for Hegel universals are more like souls

that must be embodied in concrete particulars. To Hegel's critics, however, such qualifications were irrelevant: in the new climate of naturalistic materialism ushered in by Feuerbach, there was no place for objective idealism of any kind at all, no matter how it might be modified.

Moreover, this nominalist critique of Hegel's idealism is significant not just because it signals a return to materialism in metaphysics, but also because it is part of the broader revolt against Hegel's alleged panlogism which marks the origins of existentialism.<sup>15</sup> Starting from the traditional distinction between essence and existence, *Existenzphilosophie* denies that existence is reducible to essence, and claims that because reason deals in the latter *qua* ideal forms, the 'immemorial That' of being cannot be grasped in thought. The origins of this position can be traced back to the later work of Schelling,<sup>16</sup> who from around 1809 onwards began to turn against the kind of speculative idealism with which he, as well as Fichte and Hegel, had previously been associated. He described this idealism as a 'negative philosophy', that is confined to concepts and essences, but unable to explain being or existence; it is precisely this question of existence that his own 'positive philosophy' set out to raise, by showing how Hegel's rationalistic metaphysics had failed to answer it.

Schelling's central claim is that Hegel's idealism fails to explain being or existence, because it is unable to show how thought gives rise to being, how the universe comes to be created out of the Idea. He argues that Hegel tries to get over this difficulty in making the transition from Logic to Nature in the *Encyclopaedia*, but Schelling dismisses this as an implausible piece of speculative cosmology whose failure simply serves to highlight the gap between essence and existence which idealism cannot bridge. In his lectures *On the History of Modern Philosophy* Schelling insists that Hegel fails to surmount the 'nasty broad ditch'<sup>17</sup> between the first and second parts of the *Encyclopaedia* because concepts are mere abstractions from the empirical world, and so cannot be treated as ideal forms from which the latter can be deduced; on the contrary, Schelling argues, existence must be taken as prior:

Concepts as such do in fact exist nowhere but in consciousness; they *are*, therefore, taken objectively, *after* nature, not *before* it; Hegel took them from their natural position by putting them at the beginning of philosophy. There he places the most abstract concepts first, becoming, existence etc.; but abstractions cannot be there, be taken for realities, before that from which they are abstracted.<sup>18</sup>

In stressing Hegel's inability to derive the existence of nature from the Idea, Schelling was in part defending the traditional Christian doctrine, that far from being necessary, the creation of the world is the result of a mysterious exercise of will on the part of God; this is why he holds

that, contra Hegel, the question 'why does anything exist at all? why is there not rather nothing?' cannot be answered by human reason.<sup>19</sup> Schelling therefore rejects Hegel's rationalistic claim that the transition from Logic to Nature renders the existence of the world intelligible, arguing that there can be no necessity in the move from essence to existence:

As far as this constantly repeated conception is concerned, it might be admitted that everything is in the logical Idea, and indeed in *such* a way that it could not be outside it, because what is senseless really cannot ever exist anywhere. But precisely thereby what is logical also presents itself as the merely negative aspect of existence, as that *without* which nothing could exist, from which, however, it by no means follows that everything only exists *via* what is logical. Everything can be in the logical Idea without anything being *explained* thereby, as, for example, everything in the sensuous world is grasped in number and measure, which does not therefore mean that geometry or arithmetic explain the sensuous world. The whole world lies, so to speak, in the nets of the understanding or of reason, but the question is *how* exactly it got into those nets, as there is obviously something other and something *more* than mere reason in the world: indeed there is something which strives beyond these barriers.<sup>20</sup>

Schelling's claim here is that whether a thing is real or not is not implied in its essence: we therefore cannot deduce its existence from thought alone, not even in the case of an absolute being like God. Thus, whereas Hegel defends the ontological argument,<sup>21</sup> Schelling attacks it, as showing nothing more than that *if* God exists, then he exists necessarily, 'but it does not at all follow *that* He exists'.<sup>22</sup>

This existentialist critique is also important for the way in which it raises doubts about Hegel's rationalism, by stressing his inability to explain the fact of existence. For the rationalists of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, rendering the world intelligible meant understanding why one thing happened rather than another, and (ultimately) 'why there is any world at all, and why this world rather than some other'.<sup>23</sup> In other words, it is our ability to explain the reasons and causes of things that makes the world rationally transparent, and only if no such causes could be found or if no explanation of the operation of causes could be reached would the world be rendered unintelligible. Thus, by deducing the existence of the first cause, or God, from his essence, and explaining the nature of his creation by appeal to his essential rationality and goodness, the rationalists claimed the human intellect could arrive at a complete explanation of the being and character of the universe, and so transcend all limitations in our comprehension of the world.<sup>24</sup>

To his nineteenth-century critics, Hegel appeared to have cast aside



the doubts raised by Kant regarding the intelligibility of this project, and to be the heir to this rationalist tradition, in attempting to provide a complete explanation of why the world exists and how it comes to be as it is, by claiming to have knowledge of the essential forms out of which it is created.<sup>25</sup> However, Hegel's critics argued that once it is acknowledged that he cannot deduce existence from essence, but can only abstract the latter from the former, it will be seen that no explanation for being has actually been given, so that it remains a sheer contingency, a fact which human reason cannot explain. As we have seen, the same was claimed for the existence of God: although his existence can be assumed at the outset, it cannot be proved or accounted for by appeal to his essential nature. Thus, it was argued that Hegel is mistaken in his rationalist assumption that the ultimate questions regarding existence can be answered by the human intellect, and that as a result his critics dismissed his claim to absolute knowledge as groundless.

Another significant strand in this broadly existentialist critique of Hegel's idealism lies in the assertion that Hegel is unable to grasp the reality of becoming, finitude and temporality, despite his talk of movement in his dialectical treatment of the categories. The contention is that like all idealists, Hegel posits a world of abstract essences behind the world of time and transience, and so fails to give due weight to the reality of finite existence; where Hegel is deceptive, however, is in the way in which he attributes a dynamic interrelation to the categories, and talks in terms of 'transition', 'development' and 'movement'. None the less, Hegel's critics insisted that this talk of movement can only be figurative, and that in fact it is senseless to speak of real change and development in connection with Hegel's Logic. The Aristotelian scholar Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg expressed this criticism as follows:

The speculative method undertook to show that the process whereby the concepts were produced was likewise the process which produced the thing. Thus the dialectic and the genesis of the thing seemed necessarily to coincide. On closer examination, however, it became apparent that the dialectic process in most cases inverts the genesis of the thing, or passes over it without concern, and without touching it. In view of this surprising discrepancy, the advantage which had just been gained had to be abandoned, and refuge to be taken in a distinction which had not originally lain in the plan, that the *eternal* birth of the pure concept was not the temporal development of the becoming thing, and that the two did not necessarily coincide.<sup>26</sup>

Kierkegaard, who read and was influenced by Trendelenburg,<sup>27</sup> also insists that Hegel's Logic, as a system of logical categories, operates *sub specie aeternis*, in terms of the purely static structures of being:

Misled by the constant reference to a continued process in which opposites are combined into a higher unity, and so again in a higher unity and so forth, a parallel has been drawn between Hegel's doctrine and that of Heraclitus, which asserts that everything is in a state of flux and nothing remains constant. But this is a misunderstanding, because everything said in Hegel's philosophy about process and becoming is illusory.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, it is argued that despite initial appearances, Hegel's philosophy shares in the common failing of all essentialist metaphysical systems, namely, an inability to accommodate contingency and flux within the realm of pure thought.<sup>29</sup>

This critique of Hegel's essentialism and panlogism also decisively shaped the reception of his political philosophy. Marx's reading is of course crucial here. Accepting Feuerbach's general claim, that Hegel is mistaken in taking the Idea as his starting point, Marx argues that in fact Hegel's rational state is nothing more than an abstraction from the existing political institutions, which are given a spurious finality by his procedure. Marx therefore dismisses Hegel's claim that the state is the embodiment or realization of some ideal structure,<sup>30</sup> and insists that it is a mistake to pretend that pure thought provides us with some blueprint for the necessary institutional structures of political life. He accuses Hegel of 'logical, pantheistic mysticism',<sup>31</sup> of setting the ideal above the real:

Hegel, however, talks here of the *Idea* as of a subject that becomes differentiated into *its* members. Apart from the reversal of subject and predicate, the appearance is created that there is an idea over and above the organism. The starting-point is the abstract Idea which then develops into the *political constitution* of the state. We are not concerned with a political Idea but with an abstract Idea in a political form . . . He has converted into a product, a predicate of the Idea, what was properly its subject. He does not develop his thought from the object, but instead the object is constructed according to a system of thought perfected in the abstract sphere of logic. His task is not to elaborate the definite idea of the political constitution, but to provide the political constitution with a relationship to the abstract Idea, and to establish it as a link in the life-history of the Idea – an obvious mystification.<sup>32</sup>

It is evident from this how the essentialist reading of Hegel's metaphysics decisively influenced Marx's response to his political philosophy, with the result that this issue became central for all subsequent readers of the *Philosophy of Right*.

Taken overall, therefore, it should now be clear that the picture of

Hegel put forward by his nineteenth-century critics was that of a speculative rationalist, an objective idealist who tried to reduce being to thought. Most of Hegel's followers in this period, and most of his early interpreters abroad, accepted this reading, and so came to defend Hegel in these terms.<sup>33</sup> The split between the so-called Left and Right (or Young and Old) Hegelians can be traced back to this issue, as the former sought to retain the dialectical method but abandoned Hegel's metaphysical idealism, while the Right Hegelians tried to uphold them both. It was only really in the twentieth century that the terms of this dispute were put into doubt, as this picture of Hegel's metaphysics came to be modified, and his work started to be read in a less metaphysical light. None the less, none of these later revisionist readings (some of which appear in subsequent volumes)<sup>34</sup> have wholly transformed the terms of the nineteenth-century debate: if Hegel's *Rezeptionsgeschichte* is to be properly understood, the articles collected in this volume constitute the essential starting point, as taken together they represent a crucial episode in the interpretation and criticism of his thought.

## Notes

1 Ludwig Feuerbach, 'Towards a critique of Hegel's philosophy', reprinted below, p. 123. For a general account of Hegel's reception in this period, see John Edward Toews, *Hegelianism: The Path toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805–41* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

2 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), §41 Z, p. 67.

3 Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, translated by H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), p. 166.

4 For a further discussion of this aspect of Hegel's idealism, see my *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 110–19.

5 Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 90.

6 For a full account of Feuerbach's intellectual development, see Marx W. Wartofsky, *Feuerbach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

7 Feuerbach, 'Towards a critique of Hegel's philosophy', below, p. 115.

8 Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §24 Z, p. 37.

9 Feuerbach, 'Towards a critique of Hegel's philosophy', below, p. 112.

10 Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 64–5.

11 In the corresponding passage from his *Philosophical Propaedeutic* Hegel comments: 'Therefore what in truth is before us is not the abstract, sensuous determinateness but the universal' (Hegel, *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, translated by A. V. Miller, edited by Michael George and Andrew Vincent (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 57).

12 Feuerbach, 'Towards a critique of Hegel's philosophy', below, p. 117.

13 See Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §24 Z, p. 37: 'Animal, qua animal, does not

exist: it is merely the universal nature of the individual animals while each existing animal is a more concretely defined and particularized thing. But to be an animal – the law of kind which is the universal in this case – is the property of the particular animal, and constitutes its definite essence. Take away from the dog its animality, and it becomes impossible to say what it is. All things have a permanent and inward nature, as well as an outward existence. They live and die, arise and pass away; but their essential and universal part is the kind; and this means much more than something *common* to them all.'

14 Karl Rosenkranz, *The Science of Logic*, reprinted below, pp. 283–4.

15 For a reading of Feuerbach's critique that brings out its affinities with the existentialist stance of Schelling and Kierkegaard, see Karl Löwith, 'Meditation and immediacy in Hegel, Marx and Feuerbach', in Warren E. Steinkraus (ed.), *New Studies in Hegel's Philosophy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 119–41, especially p. 136: 'The decisive objection which Feuerbach – much like Schelling and Kierkegaard – directs against Hegel's system of total mediation is that Hegel as a thinker begins with thought rather than with that precondition of all reflection which thought as such cannot anticipate; and that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* only seemingly and programmatically begins with the intuition of the simplest phenomenon, whereas it actually begins with the *logos* of the *Logic*: with self-thinking thought. Hegel begins with the *immediate* presupposition of philosophy as onto-logic, which, in turn, is onto-theology.' For a defence of Hegel against Feuerbach's critique, see Martin J. De Nys, '“Sense-certainty” and universality: Hegel's entrance into the *Phenomenology*', reprinted below, Volume III, pp. 108–30.

16 For a more detailed account of Schelling's critique of Hegel, see Manfred Frank, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein: Schellings Hegelkritik und die Anfänge der Marxischen Dialektik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975); Walter Schulz, *Die Vollendung des Deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Pullingen: Neske, 1975); Alan White, *Absolute Knowledge: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1983) and Andrew Bowie, 'The actuality of Schelling's Hegel-critique', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 21/22, 1900, pp. 19–29.

17 See below, p. 59.

18 See below, p. 50. Marx makes a similar criticism of Hegel's panlogism: 'For Hegel, the process of thinking, which he even transforms into an independent subject, under the name of “the Idea”, is the creator of the real world, and the real world is only the external appearance of the Idea. With me, the reverse is true: the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man, and translated into forms of thought' (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Preface to the second edition, translated by Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 102).

19 Schelling, *Die Philosophie der Offenbarung*, in *Schellings Werke*, edited by Manfred Schröter, 13 vols (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1946–59), VIth Supp. Vol., p. 242.

20 See below, p. 52.

21 'God . . . expressly has to be what can only be “thought as existing”; his notion involves being. It is this unity of the notion and being that constitutes the notion of God' (Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §51, p. 85). Hegel gives a more extended discussion of this issue in his *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*, in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, translated by E. B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson, 3 vols, reprint edn (New York: Humanities Press, 1974), III, pp. 155–367.

22 Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, in *Werke*, V, p. 85. This hostility to the ontological proof is also shared by Kierkegaard, and for similar reasons: see Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments or a Fragment of Philosophy*, translated by David F. Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 29–38. For a discussion of Schelling's influence on Kierkegaard, see Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, translated by George L. Stengren (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 267–74.

23 G. W. Leibniz, 'On the ultimate origin of things', in Philip P. Wiener, *Leibniz: Selections* (New York: Scribner's, 1951), pp. 345–55, p. 346.

24 For a general characterization of the rationalist position, see Edward Craig, *The Mind of God and the Works of Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 13–68.

25 Cf. Hegel's notorious remark that 'It can therefore be said that this content [of the Logic] is the expression of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind' (Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, translated by A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 51).

26 F. A. Trendelenburg, see below, p. 192. For a discussion of Trendelenburg's critique of Hegel, see Josef Schmidt, *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik und ihre Kritik durch Adolf Trendelenburg* (Munich: Johannes Berchmans Verlag, 1977), and Klaus Christian Köhnke, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism: German Academic Philosophy between Idealism and Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 11–35.

27 'There is no modern philosopher from whom I have profited so much as from Trendelenburg. At the time I wrote *Repetition* I had not yet read anything of his – and now that I have read him, how much more lucid and clear everything is to me. My relationship to him is very special. Part of what has engrossed me for a long time is the whole doctrine of the categories . . . And now Trendelenburg has written two treatises on the doctrine of categories, which I am reading with the greatest interest' (Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, edited and translated by H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, 7 vols (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), V, pp. 367–8 [5978]). For a discussion of Kierkegaard's reading of Trendelenburg, see Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, pp. 314–16.

28 Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscripts*; see below, p. 98, n. 7.

29 See Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, translated by Michael John Petry, 3 vols (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), §376 Z, III, p. 212: 'As this universal which has being for itself, thought is *immortal being*, while mortal being consists in the universality of the Idea being inadequate to itself.'

30 See Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, edited by Allen W. Wood and translated by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), §279 Z, p. 321: 'In the organization of the state . . . the one thing which we must bear in mind is the internal necessity of the Idea; all other considerations are irrelevant. The state must be regarded as a great architectonic edifice, a hieroglyph of reason which becomes manifest in actuality.'

31 Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State*, in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton, with an introduction by Lucio Colletti (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 61.

32 *ibid.*, pp 66, 69–70.

33 See the pieces by Stirling, Stallo and Harris reprinted below.

34 In recent times, one of the most influential readings of this sort has been Klaus Hartmann, 'Hegel: a non-metaphysical view', reprinted below, Volume III, pp. 243–58. Hartmann's reading is 'non-metaphysical' precisely in the sense that

he denies that Hegel is doing anything other than what Schelling and Kierkegaard said he was confined to doing: namely, offering a philosophy that makes no claims whatsoever about the necessary *existence* of the real, and which therefore limits itself to an analysis of our concepts. Interestingly, a similar point was made at the turn of the century by John Ellis McTaggart: see below, Volume II, pp. 60–88.

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## Hegel (1824)

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Johann Amadeus Wendt

The following article first appeared in an 1824 edition of the *Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyclopädie für die Gebildeten Stände*. The version translated here is a somewhat abridged version which appeared in the seventh edition of the encyclopaedia (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1827, vol. 5, pp. 140–4). It is reprinted in *Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen* (ed by Günter Nicolín (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1970), 363–71). According to Friedhelm Nicolín (*Hegel Studien* 7: 113–22), it is the first encyclopaedia article to appear on Hegel. Its wide distribution made Hegel a publicly recognized force in the German intellectual world. It is generally assumed that the author is Johann Amadeus Wendt (1783–1836), since 1810 professor of philosophy at Leipzig and widely respected for work in the history of philosophy as well as other areas. Hegel knew Wendt personally. In 1826, as Eduard Gans recruited collaborators for the Hegelian Yearbooks, he described Wendt as an ‘eclectic’ to Hegel (Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, no. 526). Hegel replied by recommending Wendt as ‘my duly esteemed friend’ (no. 528). Two years later Wendt addressed Hegel in reciprocally friendly terms (no. 593). F. Nicolín surmises that the biographical details in the article, which would not all have been generally known from Hegel’s publications, were communicated to Wendt by Hegel himself.

Assuming Wendt is the author, the letter to Gans (no. 528), two years after the article’s first publication, is some indication of Hegel’s approval of it. In stressing that the true Absolute can be discovered only as a result preserving a prior development, the article distances Hegel from still current Neoplatonic interpretations of Hegelianism as well as from Schelling in particular. In pointing out that reason is not actualized in all the accidents of history but is fully manifest only at the end of history, the article supports a non-panlogist, neo-Aristotelian view of the Hegelian identity of thought and being, reason and all reality. Thought is the

essence of being in that it is its highest, most comprehensive potential. But thought (reason) does not exhaust being in the sense of being indiscernibly identical with it. Nor is reason the eternal fully actualized essence of being. Philosophical thought both comprehends and perfects the process of being's self-actualization. The method of such thought appropriates the classical method of the human sciences: philosophy renounces subjective constructions to rethink the immanent conceptual self-development of being.

Clark Butler

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich *Hegel*, Professor of Philosophy in Berlin, one of the deepest thinkers of our time, was born in Stuttgart on 27 August 1770. His father, Secretary at the Ducal Chamber, had him attend the local *Gymnasium* school and educated by private tutors. Versed in the classical writers of both ancient and modern literature, as also in so-called philosophical opinions on religious dogmas, he went at the age of eighteen to the University of Tübingen, where he applied himself for five years to philosophical and theological studies in the theological seminary. He devoted himself with special insistence to the lectures in philosophy, but he did not find in metaphysics, as it was then presented, the expected disclosure of what is innermost. This drove him to seek out the Kantian writings, the study of which now earnestly occupied him, without, however, laying aside the study of Plato. This inquiry, moreover, had a singular influence on his view of theology. But the more his horizon was enlarged through philosophy, the more did his interest in the natural sciences grow – which along with mathematics and physics, in which he already had a foundation, he now studied more closely in connection with philosophy. In order to see something of the world, which at that time was beginning to enter upon great stirrings, he went as a private tutor to Switzerland, and from there to Frankfurt am Main. The small inheritance which befell him after his father's death enabled him to go to Jena in order to further digest the idea of philosophy which had formed in his mind (especially after the study of Fichte's science of knowledge), and to come into closer contact with his earlier university friend, Schelling, then a professor in Jena. He wrote there 'On the difference between Fichtean and Schellingian philosophies' (Jena, 1801), and edited with Schelling the *Critical Journal of Philosophy* (Jena, 1802). Moreover, he began to teach as a private lecturer [*Privatdozent*], becoming in 1806 non-titular professor of philosophy. During this time he was occupied to communicate the singular viewpoint which diverged from Schelling's, and which developed in him through unceasing research, in a work of which the *Phenomenology of Spirit* was to be the introductory part; the *Phenomenology* thus appeared as a 'system of Science' (Part One, Bamberg, 1807). In the night before the battle of Jena he completed the last sheets



of the manuscript. After this catastrophe he went to Bamberg and lived there by private means until the fall of 1808, when he was named rector of the Nuremberg *Gymnasium* and professor of philosophical preparatory sciences by the Bavarian Royal government. During this administrative tenure he worked out the entirety of his *Science of Logic*, which contains the first part and foundation of his philosophical system. The first part of the *Logic* appeared in 1812, the third and last part in 1816. In fall 1816 he was called to Heidelberg as professor of philosophy. Here he wrote his *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* (Heidelberg, 1817), by means of which he wished to give a brief overview of his philosophical path and method to the public and especially to his students. From Heidelberg he was called to Berlin to take Fichte's place, a position he assumed in fall 1818. Here he has formed for himself an imposing circle of students, in which even respected state officials take part. Here, also he published his *Outlines of Law or Natural Law and Political Science in Outline* (Berlin, 1821).

### Hegel's philosophy

Hegel, who with Schelling had risen to a recognition of the Absolute, first diverged from Schelling in that he did not believe himself able to presuppose the Absolute by means of an intellectual intuition in which subject and object coincide, but rather enunciated the demand that in science the Absolute at once must be discovered along the *path* of science, hence as a result, if at least it is to be a true Absolute. The true form of truth he therefore places in scientificity, explaining in connection with this that truth possesses the element of its truth in the concept alone, and that his efforts are directed towards bringing philosophy closer to the *form* of science and towards raising it to the level of an actual, conceptually comprehending [form of] knowing. Any immediate knowing or intuition of the Absolute contradicts this form of science. Hegel demands of science insight, not edification; and he protests in this connection against all symbolic enthusiasm, hegemony of feeling and mysticism in the field of philosophy.

'The intelligible form of science', he already said in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* (pp. 7–8, Miller translation (Oxford, 1977)), 'is the way open and equally accessible to everyone, and consciousness as it approaches Science justly demands that it be able to attain to rational knowledge by way of the ordinary understanding.' Moreover, this path, according to Hegel, consists not in the external application of some schema already in hand to objects, in a knowledge which is external to the subject matter and from which only an empty formalism emerges – a formalism with which Hegel as well reproaches the followers of the

philosophy of nature (p. 30, Miller translation). The way to science consists, on the contrary, in the proper immanent movement of every thing, the 'self-moving soul of the fulfilled content'; or, it is the method according to which the concept develops out of itself and – not being externally determined – is the progression and bringing forth of its own determinations.

The method consists in this, that thinking recognizes the object in its determinateness, in other words differentiated from other objects (the abstract moment); that it then recognizes the dialectical self-transcendence of the determinations and their transition into one another (the dialectical moment, the dialectic of thinking), and finally that thinking recognizes the unity of determinations in their opposition, or the positive [element] contained in that dialectical self-transcendence and transition into one another of determinations (the speculative moment). Being, the immediate, is self-moving; it becomes, on the one hand, the other of itself (negation of the immediate), and so in its immediate content it posits itself and distinguishes itself from itself, becoming the negative of itself. On the other hand, being, the immediate, also takes this determinate being [*Dasein*], its own deployment, back into itself, and this returning into itself is the becoming of determinate simplicity, resulting from the first [immediate] simplicity only to become yet a new beginning.

This method thus tries to express the primitive form of life itself in its development. For just as every object appears as a whole, as an immediate unity, then falls apart into opposed determinations, but then through dialectical transcendence and the resumption into unity of such determinations comes to a perfect unity which is again the point of departure of a new life sphere – through which connection the 'All' of things maintains itself; just so, through the employment of this course of development, does science itself become the spiritually self-developing and conceptually self-grasping universe. But dialectic is the middle point of this method, in that, as Hegel expresses himself, it is the moving principle of the concept viewed as the immanent progression by which alone immanent interdependence and necessity enter the content of philosophy.

Philosophy itself now has, as assigned by Hegel, the task of grasping being as it enters into knowing, and knowing or reason as it recognizes itself once again in all being, thus conceptually grasping the world as the developed Idea. He thus explains philosophy, in so far as it becomes conscious of itself as all being, as the science of reason. And from this it becomes clear how his philosophical system may, in contradistinction to subjective idealism (to which Fichte through Kant was driven) and Schelling's objective idealism, be named 'absolute idealism'. The whole of science, he says, is the expression of the Idea. Now because the Idea is reason in identity with itself, which in order to be for itself posits itself over against itself, thus becoming an other to itself, yet which in this

other is identical with itself, science falls apart into three parts which at once appear as developmental stages: (1) logic, (2) philosophy of nature and (3) philosophy of spirit.

The first part is the science of the pure Idea, the Idea considered in and for itself, in the element of thought; it has thought and its determinations as its object. But these determinations come to exist in and for themselves, and to be considered in their living unity. Logic is thus essentially for Hegel speculative philosophy, and is no merely formal science which would consider thought as the thought of a subject having a foreign content outside itself. In his sense, 'logic' assumes far more the position of the earlier metaphysics. In this connection he himself distinguishes abstract, formal thinking, which is what usually goes by the name of 'thinking', from thinking which grasps conceptually, is replete with content, and is concrete. Such thinking does not stand externally as a universal over against the particular; it is thus not empty and in need of external content, but rather determines itself out of itself. Universality and particularity are moments which, in knowing, are identical, and which are true only in this identity. Through the progressive development of pure determinations of the understanding in their transition into one another, according to the above described method, Hegel progresses in the *Logic* from the doctrine of *being* to the doctrine of *essence*, and from this to the doctrine of the *concept*, which raises itself to the speculative Idea.

This Idea is at once infinite actuality, and it allows the moment of its particularity to step outside itself as its reflection – it realizes itself. Thus to the *Logic* is attached the philosophy of nature, the science of the Idea in its otherness, of reason recognizing itself in what is objective; and to this the philosophy of spirit attaches itself as the science of the Idea which turns from its otherness back into itself, and whose object, as subject, is just as much the concept. Nature and spirit make up the reality of the Idea, the former as external determinate being [*Dasein*], the latter as self-knowing reflection. Thus if the *Logic* shows the Idea in the pure element of knowing (the pure ideal), the remaining two sciences treat the Idea as it really is, as nature and spirit, as it externalizes itself in nature, and as it then dialectically transcends this externalization to become identical with itself as spirit – which identity is thus also called 'absolute negativity'.

Concerning this circular development of the Idea, which determines the fundamental viewpoint of the Hegelian philosophy, Hegel explains himself most clearly in his *Phenomenology* (pp. 9–10, Miller translation) as follows: 'In my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance* [as what subsists, as what is identical with itself], but equally as *Subject*.' The living substance is being which is truly known

as 'subject', or which is truly known as what actually is, only in so far as it is the movement of self-positing, or is the mediation of becoming other than itself with itself. As subject this living substance is pure, simple negativity, and is precisely therein the division of the simple, or is the opposed doubling, which again is the negation of this indifferent diversity and is the counterposition to it. Only this self-restoring equality, the reflection into oneself in otherness – and not an original or immediate unity as such – is true. What is true is the becoming of oneself, the circle which presupposes its end as its goal, and is actual only through being carried out, only through its end.

It here becomes clear how much Hegel in this fundamental viewpoint both agrees and disagrees with Schelling. Both agree in surmising that thinking is being, there there is an identity of thinking and being, but many other doctrines also teach this. However, they diverge in that Schelling presupposes this identity, while Hegel believes that it is to be discerned along the path of science, through the concept itself, and that it is to be explicated in a conceptual (form of) knowing. A few of Hegel's opponents have called his system a newly worked over Spinozism. Those who wish to be better instructed as to the difference between Hegelian idealism and Spinozism may attentively read on this topic Hegel's *Logic* (pp. 536ff. in the Miller translation (Humanities, 1969)), and his review of Jacobi in the *Heidelberg Yearbook* of 1817, section one.

We shall now mention a few particular doctrines which derive from the above fundamental idea, and which have given offence to many. Thinking (knowing) is what is essential in men. It is the general activity without which nothing is truly human. But this activity is not merely general, but is also an other to itself. The nature of spirit is manifestation; spirit releases itself, becoming objective in volition. But the will is truly free will only as thinking intelligence. However, it is especially Hegel's determination of the relation between philosophy and actuality which has been misunderstood and combated. Hegel asserts, entirely in accord with the above viewpoint, that philosophy, because it is the penetration of the rational, and thus is precisely the grasping of the present and the actual, is not the exhibition of a beyond. And he adds: what is rational is actual, and what is actual is rational. If the actual is opposed to an empty, abstract beyond and the 'rational' is taken as synonymous with the 'Idea', it becomes perfectly clear that the Idea is not understood as outside of and beyond actuality, but rather in fact as what is essentially effective [*Das Wirkende*]. It is a question, Hegel says, of discerning the substance which is immanent, and the eternal which is (in so far as it is) *present*, in the show of what is temporal and fleeting. But this proposition has been misunderstood to mean that all that is in a given moment present, and thus also what is most contrary to justice, is rational. This misunderstanding has been applied in a particularly envious and hostile manner

to Hegel's views on the state, since these views are opposed to the opinions of a noisy and uproarious party among our contemporaries. However, in so far as Hegel's view of the state is known to us through his writings, it has by no means only lately been employed for the benefit of certain views of the ruling class; on the contrary, Hegel's views arise out of the fundamentals of his philosophy, which combats empty ideals everywhere, and seeks to reconcile thought and actuality in the absolute Idea out of, as it were, its own inner impulse.

Hegel's pronouncement has also this meaning: to comprehend what is is the task of philosophy; for what is, is reason. With this is connected a noteworthy statement which at once throws a unique light on the history of philosophy: it is just as foolish to imagine that any philosophy can transcend the present world as to suppose that an individual can leap out of his age. Further: philosophy, as the thought of the world, first appears only after actuality has completed its process of development; only with the ripeness of actuality does the ideal appear over against the actual, erect the same world apprehended in the form of an intellectual realm. Corresponding to this Hegel also asserts that every true and original system of philosophy is a necessary standpoint in the development of spirit, a standpoint which is to be refuted only through being absorbed in a higher standpoint.

Linguistically Hegel's exposition has something repellent about it, due to ponderousness, negligent inaccuracy and rigorousness of construction. And for those not familiar with his peculiar speech patience is in order if one is to pierce the rough husk, especially since he exerts himself so little to avoid or clarify the misunderstandings which arise in the formulation of his doctrine from the fact that he uses many technical philosophical terms in a sense peculiar to himself, deviating from philosophical usage up until now or from ordinary linguistic usage. The great unintelligibility of his writing has thus given his opponents, especially those who are the spokesmen of shallow vulgarization, the opportunity to cite against him the saying: he who does not think clearly can just as little give clear expression to his thoughts. Against this his friends and students reply: it is by its coldness, hardness and weight that one recognizes the genuineness of a precious stone. A further examination of the system here only hinted at in its fundamental characteristics is not the province of an essay such as this. Whether the above exposition, in which we have not allowed ourselves to deviate very far from Hegel's own expression, will be intelligible to the greater number of readers of his books we must leave as an open question. But it is to be wondered at that this remarkable system thus far has not encountered a single thorough judgment examining it according to its principles and following it in the application of its method. The judges of Hegel's latest writings have merely hit upon isolated points;

or they have passed judgment on the system in general, without going back to the principles contained in his earlier works.

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## Extract from *On the History of Modern Philosophy* (1833–4)

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F. W. J. Schelling

### Hegel

The philosophy which has just been presented, which could rely on universal assent if it presented itself as a science of thought or of reason and presented God, whom it reached at the end, as the merely *logical* result of its earlier mediations, acquired, by assuming the appearance of the opposite, a completely false reputation which even contradicted its original thought (hence the changeable and very various judgments that were expressed about it were quite natural). Now one might hope that this philosophy really would withdraw to within this boundary, would declare itself as negative, merely as logical philosophy when *Hegel* established precisely as the first demand on philosophy that it should withdraw into pure thinking, and that it should have as sole immediate object the pure concept. Hegel cannot be denied the credit for having seen the merely *logical nature* of the philosophy which he intended to work on and promised to bring to its complete form. If he had stuck to that and if he had carried out this thought by strictly, decisively renouncing everything positive, then he would have brought about the decisive transition to the positive philosophy, for the Negative, the negative pole can never be there in pure form without immediately calling for the positive pole. But that withdrawal to pure thought, to the pure concept was, as one can find stated on the very first pages of Hegel's *Logic*, linked to the claim that the concept was *everything* and left nothing outside itself. Hegel's own words are the following: 'The method is only the movement of the concept itself, but in the sense that *the concept is everything* and *its* movement is the *universal absolute* activity. The method is, therefore, the infinite power of knowing' (here, according to this, after it was up

to then just a question of thinking and of the concept, suddenly the claim to *cognition* (*Erkennen*) comes in. But cognition is the Positive and only has being (*das Seyende*), reality (*das Wirkliche*) as its object, whereas *thinking* just has the possible, and thus also only has what can be known (*das Erkennbare*) and not what is known (*das Erkannte*) as its object) – ‘the method is, therefore, the infinite power of knowing to which no object, to the extent to which it presents itself as external, distant from reason and independent of reason, can put up any resistance’.

The proposition: the movement of the concept is the universal absolute activity leaves nothing left for God than the movement of the concept, i.e. than for himself to be only the concept. The concept does not have the meaning here of just the concept (Hegel protests most vigorously against this), but instead the meaning of the *thing itself* (*Sache selbst*), and in the same way as the Zoroastrians say that the true creator is time, one admittedly cannot reproach Hegel with holding the opinion that God is just a concept; his opinion is rather: the *true* creator is the concept; with the concept one has the creator and needs no other outside this creator.

What Hegel primarily sought to avoid was precisely that God, as, of course, it could not be otherwise within a logical philosophy, should only be posited in the *concept*. For him God was not both just a concept and the concept God; for him the concept had the meaning that it was God. His opinion is: God is nothing but the concept which step by step becomes the self-conscious Idea (*Idee*), as self-conscious Idea releases itself into nature, and, returning from nature into itself, becomes absolute spirit.

Hegel is so little inclined to recognize his philosophy as the merely negative philosophy that he asserts instead that it is the philosophy which leaves absolutely nothing outside itself; his philosophy attributes to itself the most objective meaning and in particular a wholly complete knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) of God and of divine things – the knowledge which Kant denied to philosophy is supposedly achieved by his philosophy. Indeed he even goes so far as to attribute a knowledge of Christian dogmas to his philosophy; in this respect his presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity is the most informative, which is briefly as follows, God the Father, before the creation, is the purely logical concept which loses its way in the pure categories of *being* (*Seyn*). But this God must reveal himself because his essence consists in a necessary process; this revelation or externalization of himself is the world, and God is the *Son*. But God must also negate (*aufheben*) this externalization as well (which is a stepping outside of the merely logical – Hegel so little recognized the merely logical character of the *whole* of this philosophy that he declared he was stepping outside it with the *Naturphilosophie*) – God must also negate this externalization, this negation of his merely logical being (*Seyn*) as well, and return to himself, which happens through the human spirit in



art, in religion and most completely in philosophy, and this human spirit is at the same time the Holy Ghost, through which God first comes to complete consciousness of himself.

You can see how this process, which was introduced by previous philosophy, is understood here, and how it is taken in the most emphatic fashion as an objective and real process. Hence, however commendable one must find Hegel's impulse to recognize the merely logical nature and significance of the science which he found before him, however commendable it is, in particular, that he revealed *as logical relationships* the logical relationships which previous philosophy concealed in the Real, one must yet admit that his philosophy, when it is really carried out (precisely because of the pretension to objective, real significance), has become a good deal more monstrous than the preceding philosophy ever was, and that I therefore did not do this philosophy an injustice when I called it – an episode.

I have now determined the place of the Hegelian system in general. But in order to demonstrate this more distinctly, I want to give a more detailed presentation of the course of its development.

In order, then, to *enter* the movement, Hegel must go back with the *concept* to some beginning or other, where he is at the greatest distance from that which is only to come into being via the movement. Now within the logical or the Negative there is again that which is to a greater or lesser extent *merely* logical or negative, because the concept can be more or less fulfilled, can grasp more or less within itself. Hegel therefore goes back to the most negative of all that can be thought, to the concept in which the least can be *known*, which, therefore, he says, is as free as possible from any subjective determination, and as such is the *most objective*. And this concept for him is that of *pure being* (*Seyn*).

How Hegel arrives at this determination of the beginning can perhaps be explained in the following manner.

The subject which the preceding philosophy had as its beginning point was, as opposed to the Fichtean I which was only the subject of *our*, of human, or basically for everyone only the subject of their own consciousness – as opposed to this subject which was itself merely subjective, the subject in the philosophy after Fichte was explained as an objective subject (posited outside us, and independent of us), and to the extent to which it was now explained at the same time that the development had first to progress from this objective subject to the subjective one (the one posited *in* us), then the course in general had admittedly been determined as a progress from the objective into the subjective; but the point of departure was the subjective in its complete objectivity, and thus it was in fact always the subjective, and not the *merely* objective as it is when Hegel determines his first concept as pure being. For that system (the preceding one) what moves itself in it is only not a subject which is

already *posited as such*, but, as remarked earlier, is only subject *in such a way* that it is possible for it also to be object; to this extent it is neither decisively subject nor decisively object, but rather an equal validity between both, which was expressed as indifference of the subjective and the objective. For if it is thought of before the process or, as it were, in and before itself, it is not object to *itself*, but for precisely that reason it is also not *subject* in relation to itself (it first *makes* itself into the subject of itself, which is, of course, no less a relative concept, precisely when it first *makes* itself into the *object* of itself), it is thus also *indifference* of subject and object relative to itself (*still* not subject and object), but precisely because it is not subject and object of *itself*, it is also not this indifference for itself, and is accordingly merely objective, merely *in itself*. The transition to the process is now, as *you* know, precisely that it *wants* itself as itself, and the First thing in the process is accordingly the subject, which was previously indifferent, in what is *now* its drawing-itself-to-itself (*sich-selbst-Anziehung*). In this self-gravitation (*Selbstanziehung*) that which is attracted (*das Angezogene*) (we wish to call it B), i.e. the subject to the extent to which it is object of itself, is necessarily something restricted and limited (the attraction (*die Anziehung*) itself is precisely what does the limiting), but what attracts (we wish to call it A), precisely by the fact that it has attracted being (*das Seyn*), is itself posited outside itself, inhibited with this being: it is the first stage of objectivity (*das erste Objektive*). But this first stage of objectivity, this *primum existens*, is only the occasion of and the first step to the higher potentials of inwardness or spirituality, to which the subject raises itself to the extent to which it keeps on going over into the object in each of its forms, joins the object (for it is, so to speak, only concerned to raise its first being to a being which is appropriate to *itself*, to equip it with ever more elevated spiritual qualities, to transform it into something in which it can recognize itself and in which it can therefore rest); but as the following stage always held on to the earlier stage, this cannot happen without creating a totality of forms; the movement therefore does not cease until the object has become completely = to the subject. Hence to the extent that in the process as well the *primum existens* is a minimum of subjective and a maximum of objective, from which ever more elevated potentials of subjective are achieved, here as well (beginning with what is First in the *process*) there is a progress from the objective into the subjective.

In any case, then, Hegel also had to try to make an objective beginning, indeed, if possible, the most objective beginning, as he wanted to establish the same system overall and in the main question (*in der Hauptsache*). Here, though, he is faced with determining that which is most objective as the negation of everything subjective, as *pure being*, i.e. (how else can one understand it?) as being in which there is nothing subjective (*nichts von einem Subjekt*). For the fact that he does, by the way, attribute a

movement, a transition into another concept to this pure being, indeed attributes to it an inner restlessness which drives it on to further determinations, does not prove that he nevertheless thinks a subject in pure being; it only proves something or other of which it can only be said that it is not *not*, or is not nothing at all, but in no way proves that it already is something – if this were his thought, the *progression* would have to be completely different. The fact that he nevertheless attributes an immanent movement to pure being means no more, then, than that the *thought* which begins with pure being feels it is impossible for it to stop at this most abstract and most empty thing of all, which Hegel himself declares is pure being. The compulsion to move on from this only has its basis in the fact that thought is already used to a more concrete being, a being more full of content, and thus cannot be satisfied with that meagre diet of pure being, in which only content in the abstract, but no determinate content, is thought; in the last analysis, then, what does not allow him to remain with that empty abstraction is only the fact that there really is a more rich being which is more full of content, and the fact that the thinking spirit itself is already such a being, thus the fact that it is not a necessity which lies in the concept itself, but rather a necessity which lies in the philosopher and which is imposed upon him by his memory. Thus it is really always only the thought which first seeks to withdraw to the most minimal content possible, but then seeks again successively to fulfil itself, seeks to get to a content, and finally to the complete content of the world and of consciousness – admittedly, as Hegel professes, not in a random, but rather in a necessary progression; but what always tacitly leads this progression is always the *terminus ad quem*, the real world, at which the science finally is to arrive; but at any time it is only what we have *understood* of it that we call the real world, and Hegel's own philosophy shows how many sides of this real world *he* has not grasped; thus *contingency* (*Zufall*) cannot be excluded from the progression, namely, what is contingent about the more narrow or broader *individual* views of the world of the philosophizing subject. Thus there is a double deception in this supposedly necessary movement, (1) by the thought being substituted for by the *concept*, and by the *latter* being thought of as something which moves itself, when the concept for its own part would lie completely immobile if it were not the concept of a thinking subject, i.e. if it were not thought (*Gedanke*); (2) by pretending that the thought is only driven forward by a necessity which lies in itself, although it obviously has a goal that it is striving towards, and this goal, however much the person philosophizing seeks to hide consciousness thereof from themselves, for this reason unconsciously affects the course of philosophizing all the more decisively.

That the absolutely *first* thought is pure being is proven, though, by the fact that nothing could exclude itself from this concept if it is thought

in its purity and complete abstraction – it is supposed to be the purest and most immediate certainty, or pure certainty itself without further content, that which is presupposed along with all certainty; it is not supposed to be an arbitrary action, but rather the most complete necessity, first that being in general, then that all being in being (*in dem Seyn alles Seyn*) should be thought. Hegel himself calls such remarks trivial, but excuses them by saying that the first beginnings *must* be trivial, as the beginnings of mathematics are also trivial; but if the beginnings of mathematics (I do not know what is meant by this) – but if they could be called trivial, this would only be because they are universally plausible; but the proposition cited does not have the merit of being trivial in this sense; but that supposed necessity, of thinking *being in general* and thinking *all* being in being – this necessity is itself merely pretence, since it is an impossibility to think *being in general* because there is no being *in general*, there is no being without a subject, being is rather necessarily and at all times something determinate, *either* essential (*wesend*) being, which returns to the essence (*Wesen*) and is identical with it, *or* objective (*gegenständlich*) being – a distinction which Hegel completely ignores; but objective being is already excluded from the absolutely first thought by its nature; it can, as is already evident in the word ‘object’ (*Gegenstand*), only be opposed to an other or only be posited *for* that *to which it is an object*; *being of this kind can* therefore only be the second; from this it follows that the being of the absolutely *first thought* could only be non-objective, merely essential, purely primary (*urständlich*) being, with which nothing is posited except just the subject. Therefore the being of the first thought is not a being in general but already a determinate being. By being in general, completely indeterminate being, which Hegel claims to begin with, one could only understand that which is *neither* essential nor objective being, of which it is then immediately clear that in it truly nothing is *thought* (generic concept of being, wholly derived from scholasticism). To this one could reply: Hegel admits this himself by having the proposition that pure being is nothing follow immediately after the concept of pure being. But *whatever* meaning he might give to this proposition, it cannot on any account be his intention to declare pure being to be an unthought (*Ungedanken*), after he had just declared it to be the absolutely first thought. However, Hegel tries to get further with that proposition, i.e. to get into a *becoming*. The proposition states quite objectively: ‘pure being is nothing’. But, as was already remarked, the true sense is only *this*: after I have posited pure being I look for something in it and find nothing, because I have forbidden myself to find anything in it precisely by the fact that I have posited it as pure being, as mere being in general. Therefore it is not at all being itself that finds itself, but rather *I* find it as nothing, and say this in the proposition: pure being is nothing. Let us now investigate the *specific* meaning of the proposition.

Hegel uses without thinking the form of the proposition, the copula, the *is*, before he has explained anything at all about the meaning of this *is*. In the same way Hegel uses the concept 'nothing' as one that needs no explanation, which is completely self-evident. Now the proposition (pure being is nothing) is either meant merely *tautologically*, i.e. pure being and nothing are only two different expressions for one and the same thing, in which case the proposition, as a tautological proposition, says *nothing*, but just contains a combination of words, and therefore nothing can follow from it. Or it has the meaning of a judgment, in which case, because of the meaning of the copula in the judgment, it means the same as: pure being is the *subject*, that which carries nothingness. In this way both pure being and nothing would at least potentially (*potentiā*) be something, the former as that which carries, the latter as that which is carried, and one could then get further from the proposition, by for example having pure being emerge from that relationship of being a subject (of subjection) with the desire itself to be something, by which it would now cease to be equal to nothing and would exclude it from itself, whereby the latter, as excluded from being, now would also become a *something*. But it is not like this, and the proposition is therefore just meant as a tautology. Pure being is, as it is being in general, admittedly non-being in an immediate way (without any mediation), and in this sense is nothing. One should not be surprised by this proposition, but rather by that to which it is supposed to serve as a means or a transition. From this connection of being and nothing, *becoming* is supposed to follow. But I first want to note that Hegel wishes to explain that equation of pure being and nothing by the example of the concept of 'beginning'. 'The thing (*Sache*)', as he puts it, '*is not yet* in its beginning'.<sup>1</sup>

The little word 'yet' is interpolated here. If one uses this, then the proposition: pure being is nothing would only mean: being is here – from the present point of view – *still* nothing. But in the same way as in the beginning the *non-being* of the thing of which it is the beginning is only the not yet *real* (*wirklich*) being of the thing, though not its complete non-being, but certainly also its being, admittedly not its being in an indeterminate manner, as Hegel puts it, but its possible, its potential being, then the proposition: pure being is *still* (*noch*) nothing would just mean: it is not yet (*noch nicht*) real being. But precisely thereby it would become itself determinate and no longer being in general, but rather determinate being, namely, being *in potentiā*. However, with that interpolated *yet*, something to come which has yet to *be* is already promised, and with the help of this *yet* Hegel gets to *becoming*, of which he says in a very indeterminate manner that it is the unity or unification of nothing and being (one ought rather to say that it is the transition from nothing, from not yet being, to real being, so that, in becoming, nothing and being are not united, but instead nothing is *left behind*. However,

Hegel loves this inexact way of expressing himself; but that way the most trivial things can be given the appearance of something extraordinary).

One cannot really contradict these propositions, or declare them to be false; for they are, rather, propositions that give one nothing. It is as if one wanted to carry water in cupped hands, which also gives one nothing. The work of just holding on to something which cannot be held on to because it is not anything here replaces philosophizing. One can say the same thing about all of Hegel's philosophy. One ought really not to talk about it at all because it is characteristic of it that in many cases it consists of just such incomplete thoughts which cannot even be held on to for long enough for a judgment about them to be possible. However, Hegel does not arrive in the manner indicated at some kind of determinate becoming, but rather only at the concept of becoming in general, whereby again nothing is given. But this becoming immediately divides itself up for him into moments, so that he moves over in this way to the category of quantity, and thus in general to the Kantian table of categories.

The moments which have been presented thus far: pure being, nothing, becoming are now the beginnings of the *Logic* which Hegel declares to be the purely speculative philosophy, specifying that here the Idea is for the time being still enclosed in thought, or that the absolute is still enclosed in its eternity (the Idea and the absolute are, according to this, treated as synonymous, in the same way as thought, because it is wholly atemporal, is regarded as identical with eternity). Because it has to present the pure divine idea as it is before all time or to the extent to which it is still just in *thought*, the Logic is in *this* sense subjective science, the Idea is still just posited as Idea, and not also as reality (*Wirklichkeit*) and objectivity; but it is not subjective science in the sense that it excludes the real world, but it is rather, by revealing itself as the absolute basis of everything real, just as much real and objective science; it still has the wealth both of the sensuous and the spiritual concrete world outside itself; but, as the concrete world is recognized in the subsequent *real* part, and it turns out in that part that it goes back into the logical Idea and that it has its last *basis*, its truth in this Idea, then logical universality thereby no longer appears as a particularity in relation to that real wealth, but appears as containing it, as *true* universality.<sup>2</sup> You can see that Logic is here opposed as one part, namely, the ideal, to the other, as the real part of philosophy, which itself comprehends within itself (a) *Naturphilosophie*, (b) philosophy of the spiritual world. The Logic is only the creation of the completed *Idea*. This creation takes place by assuming that the Idea, or the concept as it is called when it begins – that the concept, via a moving force inherent in itself – which is called dialectical precisely because it exists just by virtue of the concept – that the concept progresses via the dialectical movement peculiar to it from those first determinations which are empty and devoid of content to determinations

which are ever more full of content; the greater fullness of content of the later determinations arises precisely via the fact that they contain subordinated to themselves, or as sublated within themselves, the earlier moments which precede them; every succeeding moment is the moment which sublates the earlier moment, but it is this only to the extent to which the concept itself has already achieved a higher stage of positivity in it; in the last moment it is the completed Idea or, as it is also called, the Idea which grasps itself, which now has all the ways of being that have previously been gone through, all the moments of its being, as sublated moments within itself.

One can see that it is the method of earlier philosophy which is translated here into the *Logic*. In the same way as in that philosophy the absolute subject surpasses every stage of its being so that it posits itself in an even higher potential of subjectivity, of spirituality or inwardness, until it finally comes to a halt as a pure subject, i.e. one which cannot become objective any more, and thus remains with itself, *here* the concept which goes through various moments or determinations is supposed, by finally taking up *all* of them into itself, to be the concept which grasps itself. Hegel calls this progression of the *concept* a process as well. Only there is a difference between the imitation and the original. In the earlier philosophy the beginning point at which the subject intensifies or raises itself up to a higher subjectivity is a real opposition, a real dissonance, and in this way one understands an intensification. In the Hegelian philosophy the beginning point behaves in relation to what follows it as a mere minus, as a lack, an emptiness, which is filled and is admittedly, as such, negated as emptiness, but in this there is as little to overcome as there is in filling an empty vessel; it all happens quite peacefully – there is no opposition between being and nothing: they don't do anything to each other. The translation of the concept of *process* on to the dialectical movement, where no struggle is possible, but only a monotonous, almost soporific progression, therefore belongs to that misuse of words which in Hegel is really a very great means of hiding the lack of *true life*. I do not wish to say any more about the confusion of thought and concept which also recurs here. Of the *thought* – if it in fact gets itself involved in this sequence, one can say that it goes or moves through these moments, but if this is said of the concept it is not at all a bold, but in fact a cold metaphor. One can understand that the *subject* does not remain still, but has an inner compulsion to go over into the object and thus to intensify itself in its subjectivity at the same time. But an empty concept, as which Hegel even explains being, does not yet, because it is empty, have any compulsion to fill itself. It is not the concept which fills itself, but rather the thought, i.e. I, the philosopher, can feel a need to progress from the empty to the full. But as only the thought is the animating principle of this movement, what guarantee is there against

arbitrariness? What prevents the philosopher, in order to accommodate a concept, from also being satisfied with a mere *appearance* of necessity or, conversely, being satisfied with a mere appearance of the concept?

The identity philosophy was with its first steps in nature, thus in the sphere of the empirical and thereby also of intuition (*Anschauung*). Hegel wanted to erect his abstract Logic *above* the *Naturphilosophie*. But he took the method of the *Naturphilosophie* there with him; it is easy to see how forced the result had to be of wishing to elevate into the *merely* logical the method which definitely had nature as its content and the intuition of nature as its companion; it was forced because he had to deny these forms of intuition and yet continually tacitly assumed them, whence it is also quite correct to remark, and not difficult to discover that Hegel already presupposed *intuition* with the first steps of his Logic and could not take a single step without assuming it.

The old metaphysics, which was built up out of various sciences, had as its universal basis a science which also had concepts only as concepts as its content: ontology. In his Logic Hegel had nothing in mind but this ontology, which *he* wanted to elevate above the bad form which it had had in the Wolffian philosophy, for example, where the various categories were set up and dealt with in a more or less just coincidental, more or less indifferent juxtaposition and succession. He sought to bring about this elevation by applying a method which was invented for a completely different purpose, for real potentials, to *mere* concepts, into which he in vain sought to breathe a *life*, an inner compulsion to progression. One can see that there is nothing *original* in this; the method would never have been invented for this purpose. It is something which is only applied artificially and forcibly in this case. But going back to this ontology at all was a retrograde step.

In Hegel's Logic one finds every concept which just happened to be accessible and available at *his* time taken up as a moment of the absolute idea at a specific point. Linked to this is the pretension to complete systematization, i.e. the claim that all concepts have been included and that outside the circle of those that have been included no other concept is possible. But what if concepts can be shown which that system knows nothing about, or which it was only able to take up into itself in a completely different sense from their real sense? Instead of an impartial system which takes up everything with the same fairness we will only have a partial system before us that has only taken up concepts of this kind, or has only taken up the ones it has done in the sense in which they are compatible with the system once the system has been presupposed. In the places where the system comes to the concepts which are higher and thus more familiar to people, to moral and religious concepts, at least, he has long since been reproached with completely arbitrary manipulation of these concepts.



One might like to ask where earlier philosophy had a location or a place for concepts as *concepts*. One might think it has even been claimed that this philosophy has no place for logic, for universal categories, for concepts as such. It admittedly did not have a place for concepts which still have the real (*das Reale*) outside themselves, for it was, as was said, with its first steps in nature; but it progressed in nature to the point where the subject (the I), which has gone through the whole of nature, has now come to itself, now possesses itself, admittedly no longer finds the earlier moments themselves which have been left behind in nature, but instead the concepts of these moments, and it finds them as concepts with which consciousness can now do as it pleases and apply in every direction, as it would with something it owns which is completely independent of things. In this way Hegel could at least be aware of the place in the system where the world of concepts, in all its multiplicity and systematically complete analysis, enters into the whole; he could even see the forms of what is generally called logic treated just like forms of nature – an analogy which Hegel uses himself, at least when he talks about the figures of the conclusions. Here, where the infinite potential which has gone through nature first becomes objective to itself, where it unfolds its organism, which has up to now been objectively analysed, subjectively in consciousness as an organism of reason, here, in a philosophy which progresses *naturally* and really begins from the beginning, was the only place for the concepts as such; for philosophy the concepts could not be any different from the world of the body or of plants or whatever else occurs in nature, but could only be objects which were derived in a completely *a priori* manner, and thus could not be there until they first step into reality (*Wirklichkeit*) (with consciousness), at the end of the *Naturphilosophie* and at the beginning of the philosophy of spirit. At this point the concepts are also themselves something real and objective, whereas where Hegel deals with them they are only something subjective, something which is artificially made objective. Concepts as such do in fact exist nowhere but in consciousness; they *are*, therefore, taken objectively, *after* nature, not *before* it; Hegel took them from their natural position by putting them at the beginning of philosophy. There he places the most abstract concepts first, becoming, existence etc.; but abstractions cannot be there, be taken for realities, before that from which they are abstracted; becoming cannot be there before something becomes, existence not before something exists. When Hegel says philosophy begins by withdrawing completely into pure thinking he has splendidly expressed the essence of the truly negative or purely rational philosophy; and we might be thankful to him for this characteristic expression; but in Hegel this withdrawal into pure thought is not meant or said of the whole of philosophy; he only wishes to win us over for his Logic thereby, by concerning himself with that which is not just before real (*wirklich*)

nature, but before all nature. It is not the objects or the *things* (*Sachen*) as they present themselves *a priori* in pure thinking, and thus *in* the concept, but rather the concept should again only have the concept as its content. He and his followers only call thinking which just has concepts as its content *pure* thinking. For him withdrawing into thought only means deciding to think about thinking. But that at least one cannot call real (*wirklich*) thinking. Real thinking is where something which is opposed to thinking is overcome. Where one only has thinking, and indeed abstract thinking, as a content, thinking has nothing to overcome. (Hegel himself describes this movement by mere abstractions, like being, becoming etc., as a movement in pure, i.e. unresisting ether. The relationship is roughly as follows. Poetry can, for example, represent a poetic soul in relation to and in conflict with reality, and it thereby has a really objective content. But poetry can also have poetry in general and *in abstracto* as its object – it can be poetry about poetry. Many of our so-called Romantic poetry never got further than such a glorification of poetry by poetry. But no one has held this poetry to be real poetry.)

Hegel introduces as the *antithesis* of his assertion that the concept alone is real (*das einzig Reale*) the opinion that truth rests on *sensuous* reality (*Realität*). But this could only be if the concept were a supersensuous, indeed the only supersensuous, reality (*Realität*). Obviously Hegel assumes this. This assumption derives directly from the Kantian assumption according to which God is only a concept of reason, an idea of reason. But opposed to the concept is not just sensuous reality, but reality in general, both sensuous and supersensuous. Hegel thinks the only objection to or criticism of the idea of his Logic is that these thoughts are *only* thoughts, because the true content is supposed to be only in sensuous perception. But it is not a question of *that* (sensuous perception) here either. It cannot be said in any other way than that the content of the highest science, of philosophy, is indeed *thoughts*, and that philosophy itself is the science which only comes about by *thinking*. Therefore the fact that the content of philosophy is *only* thoughts cannot be criticized, but rather the fact that the object of these thoughts is only the concept or concepts. Hegel is only able to think sensuous reality outside concepts, which is obviously a *petitio principii*, as God, for example, is not just a concept and yet is also not a sensuous reality (*Realität*). Hegel often refers to the fact that people have always thought that philosophy primarily entails thinking or reflection. This is true, but it does not follow from it that the object of this thinking is again only thinking itself or the concept. In the same way: 'The difference of man from animals consists only in thinking.' Assuming this is right, the content of this thinking remains completely indeterminate; for the geometer who looks at sensuously imaginable figures, the scientist who looks at sensuous objects or events, the theologian who regards God as a supersensuous reality will

not admit that they are not thinking because the content of their thinking is not the pure concept.

It cannot be our intention to go further into the detail of the Hegelian Logic. What really gives rise to our interest is the system as a *whole*. In relation to the system which is its basis Hegel's Logic is something completely contingent, in so far as the system is only connected in a very loose way with it. Whoever just assesses the Logic has not assessed the system itself. And whoever in particular only takes to the field against individual points of this Logic may not be wrong, and may show much astuteness and correct insight in doing so, but in relation to the whole nothing is won thereby. I myself believe that one could easily produce this so-called real logic in ten different ways. Yet I do not for this reason underestimate the value of many uncommonly clever, particularly methodological remarks which are to be found in Hegel's Logic. But Hegel threw himself into the methodological discussion in such a way that he thereby completely forgot the questions which lay outside it.

I now turn to the system as such, and will also in doing so not leave unanswered the criticisms of the preceding system made by Hegel.

Although the concept cannot be the *sole* content of thought, what Hegel asserts might at least remain true: that the Logic in the metaphysical sense which he gives it must be the real *basis* of all philosophy. What Hegel so often emphasizes might for this reason be true after all: that everything that is is in the Idea or in the logical concept, and that as a consequence the Idea is the truth of everything, into which at the same time everything goes as into its beginning and into its end. As far as this constantly repeated conception is concerned, it might be admitted that everything is in the logical Idea, and indeed in *such* a way that it could not be outside it, because what is senseless really cannot ever exist anywhere. But precisely thereby what is logical also presents itself as the merely negative aspect of existence, as that *without* which nothing could exist, from which, however, it by no means follows that everything only exists *via* what is logical. Everything can be in the logical Idea without anything being *explained* thereby, as, for example, everything in the sensuous world is grasped in number and measure, which does not therefore mean that geometry or arithmetic explain the sensuous world. The whole world lies, so to speak, in the nets of the understanding or of reason, but the question is *how* exactly it got into those nets, as there is obviously something other and something *more* than mere reason in the world: indeed there is something which strives beyond these barriers.

The main intention of the Hegelian Logic, and the one on which it primarily prides itself, is that it should take on in its last result the meaning of speculative theology, i.e. that it should be a real (*eigentlich*) construction of the Idea of God, and that, accordingly, this Idea or the absolute should not just be a presupposition in it, as it was in the immedi-

ately preceding system, but rather essentially a result. A double reproach is made to earlier philosophy thereby: (1) it has the absolute merely as an unfounded presupposition instead of as a founded result, (2) it thereby has a presupposition *at all*, whilst the Hegelian philosophy boasts of being a philosophy which presupposes nothing, absolutely nothing. But as far as the latter is concerned, Hegel must, by setting up the Logic in that sublime sense as the first philosophical science, use the common logical forms to do so, without having justified them, i.e. he must presuppose them, when he says, for example: pure being *is* nothing, without in the least having proved anything about the meaning of this *is*. However, it is obviously not just the logical forms, but virtually *all* concepts which we use in everyday life without further reflection and without considering it necessary for us to justify ourselves because of them, it is virtually all concepts of this kind which Hegel uses at the very beginning, which he therefore *presupposes*. He admittedly pretends at the beginning to be asking for very little, which is, as it were, not worth mentioning, as devoid of content as being itself, so that one cannot, as it were, help allowing him it. The Hegelian concept is the Indian God Vishnu in his third incarnation, who opposes himself to the Mahabala, the giant prince of darkness (as if to the spirit of ignorance), who has gained supreme power in all three worlds. He first appears to Mahabala in the form of a small, dwarflike Brahmin and asks him for only three feet of land (the three concepts of being, nothing, becoming). Hardly has the giant granted them, when the dwarf swells up into a massive form, seizes the earth with one step, the sky with the other, and is just in the course of encompassing hell as well with the third, when the giant throws himself at his feet and humbly recognizes the power of the highest God, who for his part generously leaves to him power in the realm of darkness (under *his* supreme power, of course). Let us admit, then, that the three concepts of being, nothing, becoming do not presuppose anything outside themselves, and that they are the first pure thoughts. But these concepts have in them a further determination: one is the first, one the second, in all there are three, and this trinity repeats itself in what follows, where more space has already been gained, in ever greater dimensions. Hegel himself speaks often enough of the tripartite division or trichotomy of the concepts. But how do I end up, here at the farthest edge of philosophy, where it hardly dare yet open its mouth, where it finds word and expression only with great effort, using the concept of *number*?

But besides this general boast of not presupposing anything, this philosophy also claims to have surpassed the preceding system in the fact that for this system the absolute is a mere presupposition, *for it*, on the other hand, it is a result, something produced, something founded. Herein lies a misunderstanding which I want briefly to analyse. As *you* know, for in that system the absolute is, as point of departure (as *terminus a quo*),

*pure* subject. In the same way as Hegel says that the truly first definition of the absolute is: the absolute is pure being, I might say: the truly first definition of the absolute is that it is subject. Only to the extent to which this subject must at the same time also be thought in the possibility of its becoming object (= subject deprived of itself) (= *entselbstetes Subjekt*) did I also call it the absolute indifference of subject and object, in the same way as I later, because it is already being thought in the *actus*, called it living, eternally moving and non-negatable identity of the subjective and the objective. In the earlier system the absolute is, then, not in any other way a presupposition and only a presupposition in the way that in Hegel's system *pure being* is a presupposition, about which he also does in fact say: it is the first concept of the absolute. But the absolute is admittedly not just a beginning or a mere presupposition: it is just as much also a conclusion and in this sense a result – namely, the absolute in its completion. But the absolute determined in this way, the absolute to the extent to which it now already has all moments of being beneath and relatively outside itself, and as spirit which can no longer descend into being, into becoming, i.e. as spirit which is and remains – this absolute is *just as much* end or result for the earlier system. The difference between the Hegelian and the earlier system as far as the absolute is concerned is only this. The earlier system does not have a *double* becoming, a logical one and a real one, but, starting out from the abstract subject, from the subject in its abstraction it is in nature with the first step, and it does not afterwards need a further explanation of the transition from the logical into the real. Hegel, on the other hand, declares his Logic to be that science in which the divine Idea logically completes itself, i.e. in mere thinking, before all reality, nature and time; here, then, he already has the completed divine Idea as a *logical* result, but he wants immediately afterwards to have it again (namely, after it has gone through nature and the spiritual world) as a *real* result. In this way Hegel admittedly has something over the earlier system, namely, as was said, the double becoming. But if the Logic is the science in which the divine Idea completes itself *merely in thinking*, then one would have to expect that philosophy would now be *closed*, or if it were to progress further the progress could only be in a wholly different science, in which it is no longer just a question of the *Idea*, as it is in the first science. For Hegel, however, the Logic is only a part of philosophy, the Idea has logically completed itself, and now the same Idea is supposed to complete itself in reality. For *it is the Idea* which makes the transition into nature. Before I talk about this transition, I want to mention another criticism of the identity system which has been made on the part of Hegel. Namely, the reproach just touched upon (in the preceding philosophy the absolute was supposed to be just a presupposition) was also put as follows: this philosophy, instead of proving the absolute in the scientific manner, had

recourse to *intellectual intuition*, and one did not know what this is; but it was certain that it was nothing scientific, rather something merely subjective, in the last analysis perhaps only something individual, a certain mystical intuition, that only a few favoured people could boast of, with the pretence of which, therefore, one could make life easy for oneself in science.

Here one can note above all that in the first documentary Presentation of the Identity philosophy, the only one which the author has always recognized as strictly scientific,<sup>3</sup> the term 'intellectual intuition' does not occur *at all*, and one could offer a reward to anybody who discovered it there. On the other hand intellectual intuition really is discussed for the first time and originally in a treatise which preceded that Presentation.<sup>4</sup> But *how* is it discussed there? To explain this I must go back to the significance of intellectual intuition in Fichte. For the term already, it is true, derives from Kant, but the application of it to the beginning of philosophy derives from Fichte. Fichte demanded something immediately certain as the beginning. For him this was the I, which he wanted to make sure of by intellectual intuition as something immediately certain, i.e. as something which indubitably exists. The expression of intellectual intuition was precisely the 'I am', stated with immediate certainty. The act was called intellectual intuition because in this case, unlike in sensuous intuition, subject and object were not different from each other, but the same. Now in the treatise quoted I say, not that the I, as it is immediately certain in intellectual intuition, but rather that which has been gained by abstraction from the subject in intellectual intuition, the *subject-object* which has been *removed* from intellectual intuition, which is thus universal and without determination, and as such now is no longer something immediately certain, but because it has been removed from intellectual intuition can only be a matter (*Sache*) of pure thought: only this is the beginning of the objective philosophy which is freed from all subjectivity. Fichte had recourse to intellectual intuition in order to prove the existence of the I: now how could his successor wish to prove with the same intellectual intuition the existence of that which is no longer the I any more, but is rather the absolute subject-object? What has the force of proof in intellectual intuition in relation to the I is just its immediacy; there is immediate certainty in the 'I am' – but is there also in the '*it is*' which is the universal subject-object? All power of immediacy is lost here. In this it could no longer be a question of existence, but rather only of the pure content, of the essence of what was contained in intellectual intuition. The I is only a particular concept, a particular form of the subject-object; this was supposed to be shed, so that the subject-object in general should emerge as the *universal* content of all being. The explanation that one should take the universal concept of subject-object out of intellectual intuition was sufficient proof that it was a question of

*matter (Sache)*, of content, not of existence. Hegel might criticize me for not having said it clearly and expressly enough (although it was said clearly enough that it was no longer a question, as it had been in Fichte, of being, of existence),<sup>5</sup> instead of which he presupposes that, because Fichte proved the existence of the I with intellectual intuition, I wanted to prove the existence of the universal subject-object in the same. He has nothing against this intention: he only criticizes the inadequate manner of the proof. Admittedly it is a question of *that which is*: but precisely this is supposed first to be sought. One does not even yet have it as something which is really thought, i.e. as something which has been logically realized; it is rather from the very beginning merely what is *wanted*; 'the pistol from which it is fired' is the mere wanting of that which is, which, though, in contradiction with not being able to gain possession of that which is, with not being able to bring it to a halt, is immediately carried away into the progressing and pulling movement, in which being (*das Seyende*) behaves until the end as that which is never realized, and must first be realized.

Indeed what is first of all in question is: *What is. How, therefore, could that from which one begins already be in existence itself (selbst schon seyend seyn)* – be something existing, given that that which is, that which exists (*das Seyende, das Existirende*) is supposed first to be found? Hegel admittedly does not want the absolute, but rather the existing absolute, and presupposes that the preceding philosophy wanted it as well, and as he sees no attempt to prove the existence of the absolute in it (in the manner in which *he* wants to prove it by his Logic), he thinks that the proof is simply supposed to have lain already in intellectual intuition.

I note that in that (first) Presentation of the Identity system the term *the absolute* did not occur at all, just as little as did *intellectual intuition*; the term *could* not occur in it *because* the Presentation was not brought to a conclusion. For that philosophy called the absolute only the potential which remained with itself, which *existed*, and was *acquitted* of all progression and further becoming-other. This was the Last, was pure *result*. That philosophy did not call that which *went through* the whole the absolute, but instead called it absolute identity, precisely in order to remove every thought of a substrate, of a substance. It becomes a substance, a *being (zum Seyenden wird)*, precisely only at the last moment, for the whole movement only intended to have being (*das Seyende*) (that which is) as being (*als das Seyende*), which was impossible at the beginning, which for that very reason was called indifference. Before that it is not something *of which* I have a concept, but is itself only the concept of all being (*alles Seyenden*) as something which is to come. It is that which never was, which, as soon as it is thought, disappears and Is only ever in what is to come, but is only in a certain manner there as well, thus Is only really in the end. There, then, it also first assumes the

name of being (*des Seyenden*) as well as that of the absolute. The (first) Presentation had for that reason very deliberately used nothing but abstract expressions such as *absolute indifference*, *absolute identity*; only in later presentations did one also allow oneself, perhaps out of a sort of condescension to those who absolutely demanded a substrate, to use the expression *the absolute right* at the beginning.

But in rejecting intellectual intuition in the sense in which *Hegel* wants to attribute it to me, it does not follow that it did not have another sense for me, and that I do still now hold on to it in this sense.

That which is absolutely mobile, of which I just spoke, which is continually an other, which cannot be held on to for a moment, which is only really thought in the last moment (take good note of this expression!) – how does this relate to thought? Obviously not even as a real object of thought; for by object one understands something which keeps still, which stands still, which remains. It is not really an object, but rather the mere *material* of thought throughout the whole science; for real thought expresses itself precisely only in the continual determination and formation of this which is in itself indeterminate, of this which is never the same as itself, which always becomes an other. This first basis, this true *prima materia* of all thought, cannot, therefore, be what is really thought, cannot be what is thought in the sense that the single formation is. When thought is concerned with the determination of this matter it does not think about this substrate (*Unterlage*) itself, but rather only of the determination of the concept which it puts into it (sculptor-clay); it is, therefore, what is not really thought in thinking. A thinking which does not think (*ein nicht denkendes Denken*) will, though, not be far from an intuiting thinking, and, as such, a thinking which has an intellectual intuition as its *ground* goes through the whole of this philosophy, as it does through geometry, in which the external intuition of the figure which is drawn on the blackboard or wherever is only ever the bearer of an inner and spiritual intuition. This, then, is said in relation to a philosophy without intuition.<sup>6</sup>

Hegel, then (to come back to him), wants the absolute, before he takes it as a principle, as the result of a science, and this science is precisely the Logic. Therefore the Idea continually develops throughout this whole science. By 'Idea' Hegel also means what is to be realized, what develops and is wanted in the whole process: it is the Idea which at the beginning is excluded from pure being, which, as it were, eats up being, which happens via the determinations of concepts which are put into being; after it has completely eaten up being and transformed it into itself, it is itself, of course, the realized Idea. This Idea which is realized at the end of the Logic is exactly as determinate as the absolute at the end of the Identity philosophy was determinate, as subject-object, as unity of thinking and being, of the Ideal and the Real etc.<sup>7</sup> But *as* the Idea realized



in this way it is precisely already at the *limit* of the merely logical, and it is thus either not possible to progress at all with it, or this can only be done outside this limit, so that it must completely leave the position within logical science which it still had as just the result of logical science, and go over into the unlogical world, indeed into the world which is opposed to what is logical. This world which is opposed to what is logical is nature; but *this* nature is no longer a *priori* nature, for a *priori* nature would have had to be in the Logic. But according to Hegel the Logic still has nature completely outside itself. Nature begins for him where what is logical *finishes*. Here nature *in general* is for him nothing but the agony of the concept. Hegel says in the first edition of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*<sup>8</sup> that nature has *rightly* been determined as the Idea's breaking (*Abfall*) with itself. (In the second edition of his *Encyclopaedia*<sup>9</sup> Hegel leaves out the 'rightly' and just says that nature has been determined as the break with the Idea, where the proposition therefore only has the significance of a historical quotation). What is otherwise said of nature is in complete agreement with this 'break': in nature the concept is supposed to be stripped of its splendour, powerless, to have become untrue to itself, and incapable of sustaining itself any more. Jacobi can hardly denigrate nature more than Hegel does in relation to what is logical, from which he excludes nature and to which he can only *oppose* nature. But in the Idea there is no necessity *at all* for any kind of movement. The Idea could not, for instance, progress further in itself (for that is impossible, because it is already complete), but would rather have completely to break away from itself. The Idea at the end of the *Logic* is subject and object, conscious of itself, as the Ideal and the Real, which therefore has no need any more to become more real and real in another way than it already is. Therefore, if it is assumed despite this that something of this kind happens, then it is not assumed because of a necessity in the Idea itself, but simply because nature happens to exist. People have tried to back up this idea, in order to give some reason or other for the Idea to go further, by saying: the Idea admittedly exists at the end of the *Logic*, but it is not yet *proven*; it must, therefore, go out of itself, in order to prove itself. But this is one of the numerous pretences with which one can only deceive thoughtless people. But for whom should the Idea prove itself? For itself? But the Idea is that which is sure and certain of itself and knows in advance that it cannot perish in its being-other; this battle would be devoid of any purpose for it. Would it, then, have to prove itself for a third, for a spectator? But where is the spectator? In the last analysis it is only supposed to prove itself for the *philosopher*, i.e. the philosopher has to wish that the Idea is party to this externalization in order that he should be given the chance to explain nature and the world of mind, the world of history. For one would laugh at a philosophy that was just a Logic in

Hegel's sense, and knew nothing of the real world; for it was not the *Logic*, but rather the Idea of the philosophy of nature and of spirit which Hegel already found before himself, that could attract the attention which Hegelian philosophy has attracted. There is nothing earth-shaking about the *Logic*. Hegel *must* come to reality. But in the Idea itself there is, then, no necessity at all for progression or becoming-other. 'The Idea', says Hegel,<sup>10</sup> the Idea in the infinite freedom in which it exists (thus the completed Idea, freedom, only is where there is completion; only the absolute is acquitted of every necessity for movement) – the Idea in the infinite freedom, in the 'truth of itself, *resolves* to release itself as nature, or in the form of being-other, from itself'. This expression 'release' – the Idea releases nature – is one of the strangest, most ambiguous and thus also timid expressions behind which this philosophy retreats at difficult points. Jacob Böhme says: divine freedom vomits itself into nature. Hegel says: divine freedom releases nature. What is one to think in this notion of releasing? This much is clear: the biggest compliment one can pay this notion is to call it theosophical. Besides, anyone who was still able to doubt that the Idea at the end of the *Logic* was meant as the really existing Idea would now have to convince themselves of this fact; for that which is supposed freely to decide must be something which really exists: something that is just a concept cannot decide. It is a very awkward point at which Hegel's philosophy has arrived here, which was not foreseen at the beginning of the *Logic*, a nasty broad ditch, the demonstration of which (it was mentioned in a few words for the first time in the Preface to Cousin [1/10, p. 213]) has admittedly had much bad blood, but has not had any at all useful and not merely deceptive information whatsoever as a consequence.

Now one can, it is true, not understand at all what should motivate nature, after it has elevated itself to being the highest subject, and has completely eaten up being (*Seyn*), to make itself subjectless again after all, to reduce itself to mere being (*Seyn*) and to let itself disintegrate into the bad externality of space and time. However, the Idea has now thrown itself into nature, not in order to remain in matter, but rather in order, through matter, to become spirit again, initially to become human spirit. But the human spirit is only the scene on which spirit in general again works off, by its own activity, alone the subjectivity which it has taken on in human spirit, and makes itself in this way into *absolute spirit*, which finally takes up all moments of the movement into itself as its own, and is God.

Here as well we will best capture the peculiarity of the system if we see what relationship it gives itself to the immediately preceding philosophy in view of this Last and Highest. The preceding philosophy is reproached with the fact that in it God is supposed to have been determined not as spirit but only as substance. By Christianity and by the catechism every-

one is admittedly instructed not only to think God as spirit but to wish and mean him as spirit; in this way nobody will be able to claim that they have discovered that God is spirit. It cannot be meant in this way either. I do not in fact wish to enter into a dispute about whether the Identity philosophy uses the expression 'spirit' in order to express the nature of the absolute, namely, at the end, or in so far as it is the last result. The *word* ('spirit') would admittedly have sounded more edifying. For the matter in question I could, however, consider it sufficient that God was determined as the existing, *permanent* self-object (subject-object), for in that way he was also, to use the Aristotelian expression, he who thought himself (ὁ ἑαυτὸν νοῶν) and, even if he was not *called* spirit, essentially was spirit, and in this sense was not substance, if substance is supposed to mean that which is in a blind manner (*das blind Seyende*). And there could also be good reasons for the fact that he was not called spirit. For one has no cause in philosophy to be wasteful with words, and one should therefore think well before designating the absolute which is only the *end* with the word 'spirit'. In a strict sense this ought also to be true of the word 'God'. For the God in so far as he is only the *End*, as he can only be in the purely rational philosophy, the God who has no future, who cannot initiate anything, who can only be as final cause, and in no way a principle, an initiating, productive cause, such a God is only spirit according to *nature* and essence, thus in fact only substantial spirit, not spirit in the sense in which piety or normal use of language understands the word; used here it would only be a misleading expression. In Hegel as well the absolute could only be substantial spirit, in the same way as the term 'spirit' in general could only have more negative than positive meaning left, because this last concept also only arises by successive negation of everything else. The naming of the Last, i.e. the designation of its *essence* (*Wesen*) could not be derived from anything physical, only the *universal* name 'spirit' was left, and as it is not human, finite spirit (for this is also already posited at an earlier stage), it is necessarily infinite, absolute spirit, but just according to its essence, for how should *real* (*wirklich*) spirit be that which cannot move away from the end where it is posited, be that which only has the function of taking up all the preceding moments into itself as that which brings *everything* to an end, but not itself be the beginning and principle of something?

Hegel as well was initially conscious of the negativity of this end, as in general the pressing power of the positive, which demanded satisfaction in this philosophy, only gradually succeeded in drawing out the consciousness of its negativity from the Identity system. This consciousness *must* have been present when it *first* arose, for otherwise this philosophy would not have been able to emerge. In Hegel as well, at least in his earliest presentation, there is still an echo, when he comes to the Last, of the

fact that it is not at all a question of thinking of something real happening or having happened. I mean by this a paragraph of the first edition of his *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*,<sup>11</sup> which is already distorted in the second edition; in this paragraph he says that the self-conscious Idea *purifies* itself of all appearance of happening, of contingency and of the being-outside and being-in-succession of the moments (the content of the Idea still has this appearance in *religion*, which pulls the content apart into a temporal and external sequence just so that it can be *imagined* (*für die blosse Vorstellung*)).

Recently Hegel tried a further greater intensification, and even sought to get to the Idea of a free creation of the world. A curious passage in which this attempt is made is to be found in the second edition of his *Logic* – the passage was different in the first edition of the *Logic* and also obviously had a completely different sense there. In the second passage it is as follows:<sup>12</sup> the Last, into which everything goes as into its ground is then also that from which the First, which was initially established as something immediate, emerges, and 'in this way the absolute spirit, which results as the concrete and last, the highest truth of all being, is known as externalizing itself with freedom and as releasing itself into the form of an immediate being at the *end* of the development – as resolving itself to the creation of a world which contains everything which fell into the development which had preceded that result, so that all this (everything which preceded in the development) is transformed along with its beginning, via this reversed position, into something which is dependent upon the result as a principle',<sup>13</sup> i.e., therefore, what was at first result becomes principle, and what in the first development was a beginning which led to the result becomes conversely something dependent *on* the result which has now rather become a principle, and thereby also something which must undoubtedly be deduced. Now if this reversal were possible in the way *Hegel* wishes, and if he had not just spoken of this reversal but had tried it and really established it, then he would already himself have put a second philosophy by the side of his first, the converse of the first, which would have been roughly what we want under the name of the positive philosophy. But a necessary consequence of this would then have had to have been (because two philosophies cannot have the same significance and status) to recognize his first philosophy as the merely logical and negative philosophy (in which the transition into the *Naturphilosophie* could then only happen hypothetically, whereby nature as well is sustained merely as a possibility). But the very way in which he sought only occasionally and in passing to interpolate this expression, by changing the original text, shows that he never made a serious attempt really to undertake that reversal, which, in the way *he* presented it, would have simply consisted in one's going back down the

steps that one had gone up in the first philosophy. Let us see what could result from this.

In the Identity philosophy it is admittedly the case that whatever precedes only had its *truth* in what follows and is relatively higher, and thus it had its truth finally only in God. It is, it is true, not exactly the way that Hegel puts the fact that in the Last everything goes as into its *ground*; one ought rather to say: everything preceding grounded itself by the fact that it lowers itself to being the ground of what follows, i.e. to that which is no longer itself being (*das Seyende*) but is instead ground of being (*des Seyns*) for an other; it grounds itself by its going-to-ground (*zu-Grunde-Gehen*), and it itself is ground thereby, not what follows. Thus the earth, whose nature it is to fall, whose falling is thus infinite – because everything which follows from the nature of a thing follows *infinitely* – finds its ground by the fact that it makes itself into the ground of something higher, and generally remains in this way in its place (at the same average distance from the centre); and in this way everything finally grounds itself by the fact that it subordinates itself as ground to the absolute, to the last. (After this correction of the terms used, let us move to the matter in question itself (*zur Sache selbst*).) As, according to Hegel, even that which is the end only makes itself the beginning *after* it is the end, it does not yet behave in the first movement (and therefore in philosophy, in which it is a result) as effective, but rather as final cause, which is a *cause* only to the extent to which everything strives towards it. But if the Last is the highest and last final cause, then the whole sequence, with the exception only of the first member – the whole sequence is nothing but an uninterrupted and continuous succession of final causes; each in its place is just as much final cause for what precedes it as the Last is final cause for everything. If we go back as far as matter which can only be thought of as without form, which is what lies at the *ground* of everything, then inorganic nature is the final cause of matter, organic nature is the final cause of inorganic nature, in organic nature the animal is the final cause of the plant, and humankind is the final cause of the animal world. If, then, in order to get to a *creation* no more is necessary than to go back down the steps which one has climbed, and if the absolute already becomes an effective cause simply by this reversal, then through this reversal humankind as well would have to appear as the effective or productive cause of the animal realm, the animal realm as the productive cause of the plant realm, the organism in general as the cause of inorganic nature etc., for we do not know how far in Hegel's opinion this should be continued, whether perhaps into the Logic, so that one would come back as far as pure being, which = nothing. Enough! We can see what inconsistencies the reversal would lead to if understood in this way, and see how illusory the opinion is that one could, by such

a simple reversal, transform philosophy into a philosophy which could also comprehend a free creation of the world.

Besides, the expression with which the externalization of absolute spirit is described in the passage cited from the *Logic*, 'that it releases itself with freedom into the form of an immediate being', shows complete agreement with the expressions which were used in the transition from the *Logic* to the *Naturphilosophie*, and in this way, then, absolute spirit, which otherwise was very definitely posited only at the end of the *whole* development, thus *after* the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of spirit, is now that which already externalizes itself into nature. But even if one disregards *this* contradiction as well, nothing would be gained by this formal approach to the doctrine of a *free* creation of the world after all; one was just as far away from it objectively (*der Sache nach*) as before, and at the end one was even further away. For absolute spirit externalizes *itself* into the world; *it* suffers in nature; it surrenders itself to a process from which it can no longer escape, against which it has no freedom, in which, so to speak, it is irretrievably involved. This God is not free of the world, but burdened with it instead. As such, therefore, this doctrine is pantheism, but not the pure, quiet pantheism of Spinoza, in which the things are pure logical emanations of the divine nature; this is given up, in order to introduce a system of divine activity and effect, in which divine freedom is all the more ignominiously lost because one had given oneself the appearance of wanting to save it and sustain it. The region of the purely rational science is left, for every externalization is an act which is freely decided and which absolutely interrupts the merely logical succession; and yet this freedom as well appears as illusory, because at the end one nevertheless sees oneself unavoidably pushed towards the thought which negates all having-happened, everything historical, because, on reflection, one must return again after all into the purely rational.

If one were to ask a follower of this philosophy whether absolute spirit externalized itself at any particular moment into the world, he would have to answer: God *has* not thrown himself into nature, but rather he throws himself over and over into it, in order in the same way to keep on putting himself at the top again; it is an eternal happening, i.e. a perpetual happening, but precisely for that reason actually not a genuine, i.e. real (*wirklich*) happening. This God is, furthermore, certainly free to externalize himself into nature, i.e. he is free to *sacrifice* his freedom, for the act of free externalization is at the same time the grave of his freedom; from now on he is in the process or is the process himself; he is certainly not the God who has nothing to do (as he would be if he, as the real God, were merely the end). He is rather the God of eternal, perpetual doing, of incessant agitation, who never finds the Sabbath; he is the God who always only does what he has always done, and who

therefore cannot create anything new; his life is a cycle of forms in which he perpetually externalizes himself, in order to return to himself again, and always returns to himself, only in order to externalize himself anew.

In the last, most popular version, which is calculated to please the greater public, this theme of externalization is usually argued as follows: 'God is admittedly already in himself the absolute (i.e. without also being it for himself), beforehand (what is this 'beforehand' doing in a purely rational development?). He is already the First, the absolute, but in order to be conscious of himself he externalizes himself and he opposes the world to himself as an other, in order to ascend from the lowest stage of externalization, where he still hovers between consciousness and unconsciousness, to humankind, in whose consciousness of God he has his own. For the knowledge of humankind, the knowledge humankind has of God is the only knowledge God has of himself.' Such a presentation sets the basest tone of affability for this system; it can already be gauged from this in which strata of society it had to sustain itself the longest. For it is easy to observe how certain ideas always first arise in the higher, namely, the scholarly or generally more educated ranks; when they have then already lost their validity in these ranks, they have meanwhile sunk down into the lower strata of society, and still survive there when they are no longer talked about higher up. Thus it is easy to see that this new religion which has emerged from Hegelian philosophy has found its main followers in the so-called *greater* public, among those in industry and commerce and other members of this class of society which is, by the way, in other ways very worthy of respect; this new religion will also go through its last stages among this public eager for enlightenment. One has the right to assume that this popularization (*Breittreten*) of his thoughts would have least of all pleased Hegel himself. However, this all derives from the One mistake, of converting true relationships which were true *in themselves*, namely, when taken merely *logically*, into real relationships, whereby all necessity disappears from them.

### Supplement from an older (Erlangen) manuscript

A general saying of Hegel's is: man should be taken beyond mere representation (*Vorstellung*) by philosophy. If one understands by representation that in us which relates to the present (*vorhanden*) object as *present*, then no one will disagree with this saying. For philosophy should accept nothing as *present* – and should *not*, for example, only reflect on the given. But if this 'taking beyond' is meant absolutely, then the saying is only a *petitio principii*, because it is presupposed as self-evident that the *higher* relationships through which the world becomes comprehensible cannot also be introduced into representation and made plausible to it,

but instead that they are above all representation, or, conversely, that whatever is assumed about these relationships within the sphere of representation must *in itself* and already because it is within the sphere of representation be contrary to reason. Admittedly, if one has first presupposed that those higher relationships must be above all representation (a presupposition which most people are encumbered with when they come to philosophy), then one must oneself in fact seek an unnatural philosophy. But the highest triumph of science would be precisely to lead down into the realm of representation that which can only be known by raising oneself above representation, which is therefore for itself not accessible to mere representation, but rather only to pure thinking. Thus the Copernican world system could not be established without driving the world beyond mere representation and without offending mere representation, and it was initially a system which was highly unpopular and which contradicted all representations. But the same system, when it is fully developed and even the representation of the movement of the sun around the earth is made comprehensible by it, reconciles mere representation with itself and becomes as clear to representation as the opposite representation was, and on the contrary the latter now appears to representation as confused and unclear. This philosophy boasts of presupposing nothing, but this is not the case: if one looks at its ground, at that which it does not say, but quietly presupposes, and which is for this reason difficult to recognize, then one finds as this last basis, which has its effects throughout, the maxims of the most comfortable rationalism, which are valid for it as self-evident foundations that supposedly nobody has ever doubted or could doubt. Precisely what Kant assumes as only proven for dogmatism Hegel assumes as absolutely and universally proven. But whoever wants to raise himself above all natural concepts with the excuse that they are merely finite determinations of the understanding even deprives himself thereby of all organs of comprehensibility, for only in these forms can everything become comprehensible to us. The mistake which Kant showed up in the application of these forms of understanding lies in the fact that it was a mere *application* of concepts to objects which were already presupposed independently of the concepts – and these objects were really objects, i.e. things opposed to the understanding; the mistake lies also in the fact that the concepts and the objects did not arise together, which meant that a mere philosophy of reflection had to arise and all living creation of science was made impossible. But there is a great difference between the rejection of a mistaken *application* of these concepts and a *complete exclusion* of them, whereby all comprehensible debate is made impossible at the same time. Whence the conspicuous narrow-chestedness of this philosophy, which means that it cannot speak openly and express itself, and it is as though breath and voice have been taken from it, so that it can only murmur incomprehen-



sible words. People complain about the incomprehensibility of this philosophy and seem to seek the reason for this in a failing on the part of the individual, whereby one is, for example, being unfair to Hegel, who, when he comes out of his confinement or speaks of matters which are closer to life, certainly knows how to express himself very decisively, very comprehensibly, indeed very wittily. The incomprehensibility lies in the thing itself (*in der Sache selbst*); what is above all understanding can never become comprehensible; if it were supposed to become comprehensible, it would first have to change its nature. It is a very bad objection to a philosopher to say that he is incomprehensible. Incomprehensibility is a relative concept, and what the oft-praised Caius or Titius does not understand is not yet therefore incomprehensible. Philosophy also has, it must be said, certain things that by their very nature will always remain incomprehensible to many people. But it is something quite different if the incomprehensibility lies in the thing itself. It often happens that thinkers who set out to solve mechanical tasks with a lot of practice and skill but without real capacity for invention, who, for example, set out to invent a machine for spinning flax, succeed in making one, but the mechanism is so difficult and over-complex or the wheels grate so much that one prefers to go back to the old method of spinning flax by hand. It can be like this in philosophy too. The pain of ignorance about the first, about the greatest matters is great and can become unbearable for every person who feels and is not mindless or narrowly self-sufficient. But if the torment of an unnatural system is greater than the burden of ignorance, then one prefers still to carry the latter. One has the right to assume that the task of philosophy as well, if it can be solved at all, must finally be unlocked in a few great and simple moves, and that it should not be the case that, in the greatest human task of all places, the invention which one acknowledges in all lesser tasks should have no validity.

## Notes

1 *Encyclopaedia*, second edition, p. 103 (first edition, p. 39).

2 *ibid.* first edition, §17.

3 *Journal of Speculative Physics*, Vol. II, Issue 2 (Division 1, Vol. IV), pp. 105ff.

4 'On the true concept of *Naturphilosophie*', *Journal of Speculative Physics*, Vol. II, Issue 1 (1801) (Division 1, Vol. IV), pp. 79ff. This treatise might also show that the author was *aware* of his method, as the contradiction which is posited in the first concept and is compelled to progress – an awareness which some would have liked to deny that he possessed.

5 Because the Identity philosophy concerned itself with the pure *what* of things, without saying anything about real existence, it could only in this sense call itself *absolute idealism*, as opposed to merely relative idealism, which denies the existence of external things (for the latter still always keeps a relationship to

existence). The science of reason is absolute idealism to the extent that it does not take up the question of existence at all.

6 Compare Vol. IV, p. 369 note, and *Method of Academic Study*, p. 98 (Vol. V, p. 255).

7 *Encyclopaedia*, first edition, §162 (second edition, §214).

8 p. 128.

9 p. 219.

10 *Encyclopaedia*, first edition, §191 (second edition, §244). [Schelling's quotation from the *Encyclopaedia* is inaccurate. The passage in question goes as follows: 'But the absolute *freedom* of the Idea is that it does not just *pass over into life*, nor that it makes life *appear* in itself as finite cognition, but, rather, that in the absolute truth of itself it *resolves* freely *to release* the moment of its particularity or of the first determination and being-other, the *immediate Idea* as its reflection, *as nature, from itself*' (*Encyclopaedia*, §244) [Tr.].]

11 §472.

12 Edition of 1832, p. 43.

13 The first edition of the *Logic* of 1812 (p. 9) stated: 'Thus spirit will also externalize itself with freedom at the *end* of the development of pure knowledge, and release itself into the form of an *immediate* consciousness, as consciousness of a being which stands opposite it as an other.'

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## Extract from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846)

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Søren Kierkegaard

And so we shall here posit and expound two theses: (A), a logical system is possible; (B), an existential system is impossible.

### *A A logical system is possible*

(α) In the construction of a logical system, it is necessary first and foremost to take care not to include in it anything which is subject to an existential dialectic, anything which is, only because it exists or has existed, and not simply because it is. From this it follows quite simply that Hegel's unparalleled discovery, the subject of so unparalleled an admiration, namely, the introduction of movement into logic, is a sheer confusion of logical science; to say nothing of the absence, on every other page, of even so much as an effort on Hegel's part to persuade the reader that it is there.<sup>1</sup> And it is surely strange to make movement fundamental in a sphere where movement is unthinkable; and to make movement explain logic, when as a matter of fact logic cannot explain movement. On this point I am so fortunate as to be in a position to refer the reader to a man whose thinking is sound, who is happily schooled in Greek philosophy – rare trait in these times! and who has known how to emancipate himself and his thought from every obsequious and slavish relationship to Hegel, from whose fame all seek to profit, if not otherwise, then by transcending him, i.e. by pretending to have assimilated him and made him a subordinate moment in one's thought; but who has preferred to rest content with Aristotle and with himself. I refer to Trendelenburg in his *Logische Untersuchungen*. His merit consists among other things in having apprehended movement as the inexplicable presupposition and common factor of thinking and being, and as their continued reciprocity. I cannot here make any attempt to show how his view is related to the

Greeks and to Aristotle, or to what, strangely enough, in a certain popular sense, has a certain likeness to the terms of his exposition: a little passage in Plutarch's work on Isis and Osiris. I am by no means of the opinion that the Hegelian philosophy has been without beneficial influence on Trendelenburg. But the fortunate thing about him is that he has perceived that it will not do merely to tinker with Hegel's thought-structure, so as to introduce a few improvements; or to transcend him, and so forth – a dishonest device by which many a bungler in our age seeks to appropriate Hegel's celebrity to himself, fraternizing with him like a *lazzarone*. But sober-minded as a Greek thinker, without promising everything or pretending to shower blessings on all mankind, Trendelenburg nevertheless gives his reader much, and cheers the heart of one who needed his guidance in studying the Greeks.

Nothing must then be incorporated in a logical system that has any relation to existence, that is not indifferent to existence. The infinite preponderance which the logical as the objective has over all thinking is again limited by the fact that seen subjectively it is an hypothesis, precisely because it is different to existence in the sense of actuality. This double aspect of the logical distinguishes it from the mathematical, which has no relationship at all either to or from existence, but simply has objectivity – not objectivity and the hypothetical together – as the synthesis and the contradiction in which the logical is negatively related to existence.

Nor may the logical system be a mystification, an exhibition of ventriloquism, by which the content of reality is underhandedly and surreptitiously produced; an exhibition in which the logical thought suddenly gives a start, and finds what the Herr Professor or the licentiate has had up his sleeve. A stricter judgement would be possible on this point if it were determined in what sense the categories constitute an abridgement of existence, whether logical thought is abstract after existence or abstract without any relation to existence. This is a question I could wish to treat a little more fully in another connection; and even if the problem were not in all respects satisfactorily solved, it is always something to have raised the question.

(B) The dialectic of the beginning must be made clear. This, its almost amusing character, that the beginning is, and again is not, just because it is the beginning – this true dialectical remark has long enough served as a sort of game played in good Hegelian society.

The System, so it is said, begins with the immediate; in lieu of being dialectical, some are even oratorical enough to say that it begins with the most immediate of all, although precisely the comparative reflection here involved might prove dangerous to the beginning.<sup>2</sup> The System begins with the immediate, and hence without any presuppositions, and hence absolutely; the beginning of the System is an absolute beginning. This is

quite correct, and has also been sufficiently admired. But before making a beginning with the System, why is it that the second, equally, aye, precisely equally important question has not been raised, taken understandingly to heart, and had its clear implications respected: *How does the System begin with the immediate? That is to say, does it begin with it immediately?* The answer to this question must be an unconditional negative. If the System is presumed to come after existence, by which a confusion with an existential system may be occasioned, then the System is of course *ex post facto*, and so does not begin immediately with the immediacy with which existence began; although in another sense it may be said that existence did not begin with the immediate, since the immediate never is as such, but is transcended as soon as it is. The beginning which begins with the immediate *is thus itself reached by means of a process of reflection.*

Here is the difficulty. For unless, in disingenuousness or in thoughtlessness or in breathless haste to get the System finished, we let this one thought slip away from us, it is, in all its simplicity sufficient to decide that no existential system is possible; and that no logical system may boast of an absolute beginning, since such a beginning, like pure being, is a pure chimera.

When it is impossible to begin immediately with the immediate, which would be to think as by accident or miracle, and therefore not to think, and it is necessary to reach the beginning through a process of reflection, let us quite simply ask (alas! Here I must apprehend being stood in a corner for my simplicity, since everyone can understand my question – and must therefore feel embarrassed over my display of popular knowledge): how do I put an end to the reflection which was set up in order to reach the beginning here in question? Reflection has the remarkable property of being infinite. But to say that it is infinite is equivalent, in any case, to saying that it cannot be stopped by itself; because in attempting to stop itself it must use itself, and is thus stopped in the same way that a disease is cured when it is allowed to choose its own treatment, which is to say that it waxes and thrives. But perhaps the infinity thus characterizing reflection is the bad infinite (*das schlechte Unendlichkeit*)? In that case we shall naturally soon have finished with our process of reflection, for the bad infinite is supposed to be something so contemptible that it must at all odds be renounced, the sooner the better. But may I not ask in this connection, if it is permitted to offer a question, how does it happen that Hegel himself and all Hegelians, who are otherwise supposed to be dialecticians, become angry at this point, angry as Dutchmen? Or is 'bad' a logical determination? From whence does such a predicate find its way into logic? How does it happen that derision, and contempt, and measures of intimidation, are pressed into service as legitimate means of getting forward in logic, so that the consent of the reader is secured for

an absolute beginning, because he is afraid of what acquaintances and neighbours will think of him if he does not agree to its validity? Is not 'bad' an ethical category?<sup>3</sup> What is the implication involved in speaking of a bad infinite? The implication is that I hold some person responsible for refusing to end the reflective process. And this means, does it not, that I require him to do something? But as a genuinely speculative philosopher I assume, on the contrary, that reflection ends itself. If that is the case, why do I make any demand upon the thinker? And what is it that I require of him? I ask him for a resolve. And in so doing, I do well, for in no other way can the process of reflection be halted. But a philosopher is never justified, on the other hand, in playing tricks on people, asserting one moment that the reflective process halts itself and comes to an end in an absolute beginning; and the next moment proceeding to mock a man whose only fault is that he is stupid enough to believe the first assertion, mocking him, so as to help him to arrive in this manner at an absolute beginning, which hence seems to be achieved in two different ways. But if a resolution of the will is required to end the preliminary process of reflection, the presuppositionless character of the System is renounced. Only when reflection comes to a halt can a beginning be made, and reflection can be halted only by something else, and this something else is something quite different from the logical, being a resolution of the will. Only when the beginning, which puts an end to the process of reflection, is a radical breach of such a nature that the absolute beginning breaks through the continued infinite reflection, then only is the beginning without presuppositions. But when the breach is effected by breaking off the process of reflection arbitrarily, so as to make a beginning possible, then the beginning so made cannot be absolute; for it has come into being through a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*.

When a beginning with the immediate is arrived at by means of a preliminary reflection, the term 'immediate' must evidently mean something else than it usually does. Hegelian logicians have quite rightly perceived this, and they therefore define this 'immediate', with which logic begins, as the most abstract content remaining after an exhaustive reflection. To this definition there can be no objection, but it is certainly objectionable not to respect the implications of what is thus asserted; for this definition says indirectly that there is no absolute beginning. 'How so', I think I hear someone say, 'when we have abstracted from everything, is there then not, etc., etc.?' Aye, to be sure – *when* we have abstracted from everything. Why can we not remember to be human beings? This act of abstraction, like the preceding act of reflection, is infinite. How then does it come to an end – and it is only when . . . that . . . Let us try an experiment in thought. Suppose the infinite act of abstraction to be *in actu*. However, the beginning is not identical with the act of abstraction, but comes afterwards. With what do I begin, now

that I have abstracted from everything? Ah, here an Hegelian will perhaps fall on my breast, overcome by deep emotion, blissfully stammering the answer: with nothing. Very well, but now I must offer my second question: *How* do I begin with nothing? Unless in fact the infinite act of abstraction is one of those tricks of legerdemain which may readily be performed two at a time; if, on the contrary, it is the most strenuous of all acts of thought, what then? Why then, of course, all my strength is required to hold it fast. If I let slip any part of my strength, I no longer abstract from everything. And if under such circumstances I make a beginning, I do not begin with nothing; precisely because I did not abstract from everything when I began. That is to say, if it is at all possible for a human being to abstract from everything in his thinking, it is at any rate impossible for him to do more, since if this act does not transcend human power, it absolutely exhausts it. To grow weary of the act of abstracting, and thus to arrive at a beginning, is an explanation of the sort valid only for costermongers, who do not take a little discrepancy so seriously.

This expression – beginning with nothing – quite irrespective of its relation to the previous infinite act of abstraction, is in itself deceptive. This ‘beginning with nothing’ is in fact neither more nor less than a new phase for the dialectic of the beginning. The beginning is, and again is not, precisely because it is the beginning – this is something which can also be expressed by saying that the beginning begins with nothing. It is only a new expression, and does not carry us a single step forward. In the one case I merely think a beginning in the abstract; in the second case I think of the relation which this same equally abstract beginning has to a something with which it begins. And now it appears, quite properly, that this something, aye, the only something which could correspond to such a beginning, is nothing. But this constitutes only a tautological variation of the second of the above propositions: the beginning is not. The beginning is not, and the beginning begins with nothing, are wholly identical propositions; and we have not advanced a single step.

What if, instead of talking or dreaming about an absolute beginning, we talked about a leap? To be content with a ‘mostly’, an ‘as good as’, a ‘you could almost say that’, a ‘when you sleep on it until tomorrow, you can easily say that’ suffices merely to betray a kinship with Trop, who, little by little, reached the point of assuming that almost having passed his examinations was the same as having passed them. We all laugh at this; but when philosophers reason in the same manner, in the kingdom of the truth and in the sanctuary of science, then it is good philosophy, genuine speculative philosophy. Lessing was no speculative philosopher; hence he assumed the opposite, namely, that an infinitesimal difference makes the chasm infinitely wide, because it is the presence of the leap itself that makes the chasm infinitely wide.

It is strange that Hegelians, who know in logic that reflection comes to an end of itself, and that a universal doubt changes over into its opposite by itself (a true sailor's yarn, i.e. truly a sailor's yarn), in daily life, on the other hand, when they are pleasant people, when they are like all the rest of us (except, as I am always willing and ready to admit, that they are more talented and more learned and so forth), know that reflection can be halted only by a leap. Let us dwell a little on this point. When the subject does not put an end to his reflection, he is made infinite in reflection, i.e. he does not arrive at a decision.<sup>4</sup> In so running wild in his reflection the individual becomes essentially objective, and loses more and more the decisiveness that inheres in subjectivity, its return back into itself. And yet it is assumed that reflection can be halted objectively, though the truth is the precise contrary: objectively it is not to be stopped, and when it is halted subjectively it does not stop itself, but it is the subject who stops it.

Take an example. As soon as Röttscher, who in his book on Aristophanes professes to understand the necessity of the transitions found in the world-process, and who has presumably also understood how in logic, reflection works its way through to an absolute beginning – as soon as Röttscher sets himself the task of explaining Hamlet, he knows that reflection can be halted only by means of a resolve. He does not assume – shall I say strangely enough? – strangely enough, Röttscher does not assume that Hamlet finally came to an absolute beginning simply by continuing to reflect. But in logic he assumes – shall I say strangely enough? – strangely enough, in logic Röttscher presumably assumes that reflection works itself through by itself, so as to come to a stop at an absolute beginning. This is something I cannot understand, and it troubles me not to be able to understand it, precisely because I admire Röttscher's talent, his classical culture and his tasteful and yet primitive grasp of psychological phenomena.

That which has here been said about the beginning of a logical system (for the fact that the same considerations show the impossibility of an existential system will be further developed under B) is very plain and simple; I feel almost embarrassed to say it, or I feel embarrassed to be obliged to say it, embarrassed on account of my situation, that the poor author of a little piece, who would rather kneel in worship before the System, should be compelled to say something of this kind. An argument to the same purport might also be presented in a different manner, as a consequence of which one or another reader might be impressed, in that the method of presentation chose to recall specifically the philosophical controversies of a recent past. The question would then turn on the significance of Hegel's *Phaenomenologie* for the System: whether it is an Introduction, whether it remains outside the System, and if it is an Introduction, whether it is again incorporated within the System; further-



more, whether Hegel does not have to his credit the astonishing achievement of not only having written the System, but of having written two, aye, three Systems, which must always require a matchless systematic talent, but which nevertheless seems to be the case, since the System is finished more than once; and so forth. All this has at bottom been said often enough. But it has also been said in a confusing manner: a big book has been written about it, which first says everything that Hegel has said, and thereupon takes cognizance of this or that later contribution – all of which serves only to distract the attention, and involves in a distracting voluminousness that which can be said quite briefly.

(γ) In order to throw some light on the nature of logic, it might be desirable to orientate oneself psychologically in the state of mind of anyone who thinks the logical – so as to determine what kind of a dying away from the self is involved, and how far the imagination plays a role in this connection. This is again a simple and very unassuming remark, but for all that possibly quite true, and by no means superfluous. A philosopher has gradually come to be so fantastic a being that scarcely the most extravagant fancy has ever invented anything so fabulous. In general, how does the empirical ego stand related to the pure ego, the I-am-I? Anyone who is ambitious to become a philosopher would naturally like to have a little information on this point, and above all, cannot wish to become ridiculous by being transformed, *ein zwei drei kokolorum*, into speculative philosophy in the abstract. If the logical thinker is at the same time human enough not to forget that he is an existing individual, even if he completes the system, all the fantasticalness and charlatanry will gradually disappear. Granted that it would require an eminent logical talent to reconstruct Hegel's *Logic*, it needs only sound common sense in one who once enthusiastically believed in the great achievement that Hegel professed, and proved his enthusiasm by believing it, and his enthusiasms for Hegel by believing it of him – it needs only sound common sense for such a one to see that Hegel has in many places dealt indefensibly, not with costermongers who never believe the half of what a man says, but with enthusiastic youth who believed him. Even if such a youth has not been exceptionally gifted, when he has had enthusiasm enough to despair of himself in the moment of difficulty, rather than give up Hegel – when such a youth comes to himself, he has a right to demand that laughter should destroy in Hegel what laughter has a just claim upon. And such a youth has honoured Hegel more highly than many a follower, who in deceptive asides sometimes makes Hegel everything, and sometimes a mere triviality.

### *B An existential system is impossible*

An existential system cannot be formulated. Does this mean that no such system exists? By no means; nor is this implied in our assertion. Reality itself is a system – for God; but it cannot be a system for any existing spirit. System and finality correspond to one another, but existence is precisely the opposite of finality. It may be seen, from a purely abstract point of view, that system and existence are incapable of being thought together; because in order to think existence at all, systematic thought must think it as abrogated, and hence as not existing. Existence separates, and holds the various moments of existence discreetly apart; the systematic thought consists of the finality which brings them together.

In reality we are likely to encounter a deception, an illusion. This was dealt with in the *Fragments*, and to this treatment I must here refer. It will be found in the Interlude, in the discussion of the question whether the past is more necessary than the future. Whenever a particular existence has been relegated to the past, it is complete, has acquired finality, and is in so far subject to a systematic apprehension. Quite right – but for whom is it so subject? Anyone who is himself an existing individual cannot gain this finality outside existence which corresponds to the eternity into which the past has entered. If a thinker is so absent-minded as to forget that he is an existing individual, still, absent-mindedness and speculation are not precisely the same thing. On the contrary, the fact that the thinker is an existing individual signifies that existence imposes its own requirement upon him. And if he is a great individual, it may signify that his own contemporary existence may, when it comes to be past, have the validity of finality for the systematic thinker. But who is this systematic thinker? Aye, it is he who is outside of existence and yet in existence, who is in his eternity for ever complete, and yet includes all existence within himself – it is God. Why the deception? Because the world has stood now for six thousand years, does not existence have the same claim upon the existing individual as always? And this claim is not that he should be a contemplative spirit in imagination, but an existing spirit in reality. All understanding comes after the fact. Now, while the existing individual undoubtedly comes after the preceding six thousand years, if we assume that he spends his life in arriving at a systematic understanding of these, the strangely ironical consequence would follow, that he could have no understanding of himself in his existence, because he had no existence, and thus had nothing which required to be understood afterwards. Such a thinker would either have to be God, or a fantastic *quodlibet*. Everyone doubtless perceives the immorality of such a situation, and doubtless also perceives that it is quite in order, as another author has said respecting the Hegelian system, that we owe to

Hegel the completion of the System, the Absolute System – without the inclusion of an Ethics. Let us smile if we will at the ethico-religious extravaganzas of the Middle Ages in asceticism and the like; but let us above all not forget that the speculative low-comedy extravagance of assuming to be an I-am-I, and nevertheless qua human being often so Philistine a character that no man of enthusiasm could endure to live such a life – is equally ridiculous.

Respecting the impossibility of an existential system, let us then ask quite simply, as a Greek youth might have asked his teacher (and if the superlative wisdom can explain everything, but cannot answer a simple question it is clear that the world is out of joint): 'Who is to write or complete such a system?' Surely a human being; unless we propose again to begin using the strange mode of speech which assumes that a human being becomes speculative philosophy in the abstract, or becomes the identity of subject and object. So then, a human being – and surely a living human being, i.e. an existing individual. Or if the speculative thought which brings the systems to light is the joint effort of different thinkers: in what last concluding thought does this fellowship finally realize itself? How does it reach the light of day? Surely through some human being? And how are the individual participants related to the joint effort, what are the categories which mediate between the individual and world-process, and who is it again who strings them all together on the systematic thread? Is he a human being, or is he speculative philosophy in the abstract? But if he is a human being, then he is also an existing individual. Two ways, in general, are open for an existing individual: *either* he can do his utmost to forget that he is an existing individual, by which he becomes a comic figure, since existence has the remarkable trait of compelling an existing individual to exist whether he wills it or not. (The comical contradiction in willing to be what one is not, as when a man wills to be a bird, is not more comical than the contradiction of not willing to be what one is, as *in casu* an existing individual; just as the language finds it comical that a man forgets his name, which does not so much mean forgetting a designation, as it means forgetting the distinctive essence of one's being.) *Or* he can concentrate his entire energy upon the fact that he is an existing individual. It is from this side, in the first instance, that objection must be made to modern philosophy; not that it has a mistaken presupposition, but that it has a comical presupposition, occasioned by its having forgotten, in a sort of world-historical absent-mindedness, what it means to be a human being. Not indeed, what it means to be a human being in general; for this is the sort of thing that one might even induce a speculative philosopher to agree to; but what it means that you and I and he are human beings, each one for himself.

The existing individual who concentrates all his attention upon the

circumstance that he is an existing individual will welcome these words of Lessing about a persistent striving as a beautiful saying. To be sure, it did not indeed win for its author an immortal fame, because it is very simple; but every thoughtful individual must needs confirm its truth. The existing individual who forgets that he is an existing individual will become more and more absent-minded; and as people sometimes embody the fruits of their leisure moments in books, so we may venture to expect as the fruit of his absent-mindedness the expected existential system – well, perhaps not all of us, but only those who are almost as absent-minded as he is. While the Hegelian philosophy goes on and becomes an existential system in sheer distraction of mind, and what is more, is finished – without having an Ethics (where existence properly belongs), the more simple philosophy which is propounded by an existing individual for existing individuals will more especially emphasize the ethical.

As soon as it is remembered that philosophizing does not consist in addressing fantastic beings in fantastic language, but that those to whom the philosopher addresses himself are human beings; so that we have not to determine fantastically *in abstracto* whether a persistent striving is something lower than the systematic finality, or *vice versa*, but that the question is what existing human beings, in so far as they are existing beings, must needs be content with: then it will be evident that the ideal of a persistent striving is the only view of life that does not carry with it an inevitable disillusionment. Even if a man has attained to the highest, the repetition by which life receives content (if one is to escape retrogression or avoid becoming fantastic) will again constitute a persistent striving; because here again finality is moved further on, and postponed. It is with this view of life as it is with the Platonic interpretation of love as a want; and the principle that not only he is in want who desires something he does not have, but also he who desires the continued possession of what he has. In a speculative-fantastic sense we have a positive finality in the System, and in an aesthetic-fantastic sense we have one in the fifth act of the drama. But this sort of finality is valid only for fantastic beings.

The ideal of a persistent striving expresses the existing subject's ethical view of life. It must therefore not be understood in a metaphysical sense, nor indeed is there any individual who exists metaphysically. One might thus by way of misunderstanding set up an antithesis between finality and the persistent striving for truth. But this is merely a misunderstanding in this sphere. In the ethical sense, on the contrary, the persistent striving represents the consciousness of being an existing individual; the constant learning is the expression for the incessant realization, in no moment complete as long as the subject is in existence; the subject is aware of this fact, and hence is not deceived. But Greek philosophy always had a relation to Ethics. Hence it was not imagined that the principle of always

being a learner was a great discovery, or the enthusiastic enterprise of a particular distinguished individual; for it was neither more nor less than the realization that a human being is an existing individual, which it constitutes no great merit to be aware of, but which it is thoughtless to forget.

So-called pantheistic systems have often been characterized and challenged in the assertion that they abrogate the distinction between good and evil, and destroy freedom. Perhaps one would express oneself quite as definitely, if one said that every such system fantastically dissipates the concept *existence*. But we ought to say this not merely of pantheistic systems; it would be more to the point to show that every system must be pantheistic precisely on account of its finality. Existence must be revoked in the eternal before the system can round itself out; there must be no existing remainder, not even such a little minikin as the existing Herr Professor who writes the system. But this is not the way in which the problem is usually dealt with. No, pantheistic systems are attacked, partly in tumultuous aphorisms which again and again promise a new system; and partly by way of scraping together something supposed to be a system, and inserting in it a special paragraph in which it is laid down that the concept *existence*, or actuality, is intended to be especially emphasized. That such a paragraph is a mockery of the entire system, that instead of being a paragraph in a system it is an absolute protest against the system, makes no difference to busy systematists. If the concept of existence is really to be stressed, this cannot be given a direct expression as a paragraph in a system; all direct swearing and oath-supported assurances serve only to make the topsy-turvy profession of the paragraph more and more ridiculous. An actual emphasis on existence must be expressed in an essential form; in view of the elusiveness of existence, such a form will have to be an indirect form, namely, the absence of a system. But this again must not degenerate into an asseverating formula, for the indirect character of the expression will constantly demand renewal and rejuvenation in the form. In the case of committee reports, it may be quite in order to incorporate in the report a dissenting opinion; but an existential system which includes the dissenting opinion as a paragraph in its own logical structure is a curious monstrosity. What wonder that the System continues to sustain its life as a going concern? In general, objections are haughtily ignored; if a particular objection seems to attract a little attention, the systematic entrepreneurs engage a copyist to copy off the objection, which thereupon is incorporated in the System; and when the book is bound the System is complete.

The systematic Idea is the identity of subject and object, the unity of thought and being. Existence, on the other hand, is their separation. It does not by any means follow that existence is thoughtless; but it has brought about, and brings about, a separation between subject and object,

thought and being. In the objective sense, thought is understood as being pure thought; this corresponds in an equally abstract-objective sense to its object, which object is therefore the thought itself, and the truth becomes the correspondence of thought with itself. This objective thought has no relation to the existing subject; and while we are always confronted with the difficult question of how the existing subject slips into this objectivity, where subjectivity is merely pure abstract subjectivity (which again is an objective determination, not signifying any existing human being), it is certain that the existing subjectivity tends more and more to evaporate. And finally, if it is possible for a human being to become anything of the sort, and it is merely something of which at most he becomes aware through the imagination, he becomes the pure abstract conscious participation in and knowledge of this pure relationship between thought and being, this pure identity; aye, this tautology, because this being which is ascribed to the thinker does not signify that he is, but only that he is engaged in thinking.

The existing subject, on the other hand, is engaged in existing, which is indeed the case with every human being. Let us therefore not deal unjustly with the objective tendency, by calling it an ungodly and pantheistic self-deification; but let us rather view it as an essay in the comical. For the notion that from now on until the end of the world nothing could be said except what proposed a further improvement in an almost completed system is merely a systematic consequence for systematists.

By beginning at once to use ethical categories in criticism of the objective tendency, one does it an injustice, and fails to make contact with it, because one has nothing in common with what is under attack. But by remaining in the metaphysical sphere, one is enabled to use the comical, which also lies in the metaphysical, so as to bring such a transfigured professor to book. If a dancer could leap very high, we would admire him. But if he tried to give the impression that he could fly, let laughter single him out for suitable punishment; even though it might be true that he could leap as high as any dancer ever had done. Leaping is the accomplishment of a being essentially earthly, one who respects the earth's gravitational force, since the leaping is only momentary. But flying carries a suggestion of being emancipated from telluric conditions, a privilege reserved for winged creatures, and perhaps also shared by the inhabitants of the moon – and there perhaps the System will first find its true readers.

Being an individual man is a thing that has been abolished, and every speculative philosopher confuses himself with humanity at large; whereby he becomes something infinitely great, and at the same time nothing at all. He confounds himself with humanity in sheer distraction of mind, just as the opposition press uses the royal 'we', and sailors say: 'devil take me!'. But when a man has indulged in oaths for a long time, he

returns at last to the simple utterance, because all swearing is self-nugatory; and when one discovers that every street urchin can say 'we', one perceives that it means a little more, after all, to be a particular individual. And when one finds that every cellar-dweller can play the game of being humanity, one learns at last that being purely and simply a human being is a more significant thing than playing the society game in this fashion. And one thing more. When a cellar-dweller plays this game everyone thinks it ridiculous; and yet it is equally ridiculous for the greatest man in the world to do it. And one may very well permit oneself to laugh at him for this, while still entertaining a just and proper respect for his talents and his learning, and so forth.

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### **Chapter III Real or ethical subjectivity – the subjective thinker**

#### *§ 1 Existence and reality*

The difficulty that inheres in existence, with which the existing individual is confronted, is one that never really comes to expression in the language of abstract thought, much less receives an explanation. Because abstract thought is *sub specie aeterni* it ignores the concrete and the temporal, the existential process, the predicament of the existing individual arising from his being a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal situated in existence.<sup>5</sup> Now if we assume that abstract thought is the highest manifestation of human activity, it follows that philosophy and the philosophers proudly desert existence, leaving the rest of us to face the worst. And something else, too, follows for the abstract thinker himself, namely, that since he is an existing individual he must in one way or another be suffering from absent-mindedness.

The abstract problem of reality (if it is permissible to treat this problem abstractly, the particular and the accidental being constituents of the real, and directly opposed to abstraction) is not nearly so difficult a problem as it is to raise and to answer the question of what it means that this definite something is a reality. This definite something is just what abstract thought abstracts from. But the difficulty lies in bringing this definite something and the ideality of thought together, by penetrating the concrete particularity with thought. Abstract thought cannot even take cognizance of this contradiction, since the very process of abstraction prevents the contradiction from arising.

This questionable character of abstract thought becomes apparent especially in connection with all existential problems, where abstract thought gets rid of the difficulty by leaving it out, and then proceeds to boast of having explained everything. It explains immortality in general, and all goes quite smoothly, in that immortality is identified with eternity,

with the eternity which is essentially the medium of all thought. But whether an existing individual human being is immortal, which is the difficulty, abstract thought does not trouble to inquire. It is disinterested; but the difficulty inherent in existence constitutes the interest of the existing individual, who is infinitely interested in existing. Abstract thought thus helps me with respect to my immortality by first annihilating me as a particular existing individual and then making me immortal, about as when the doctor in Holberg killed the patient with his medicine – but also expelled the fever. Such an abstract thinker, one who neglects to take into account the relationship between his abstract thought and his own existence as an individual, not careful to clarify this relationship to himself, makes a comical impression upon the mind even if he is ever so distinguished, because he is in process of ceasing to be a human being. While a genuine human being, as a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, finds his reality in holding these two factors together, infinitely interested in existing – such an abstract thinker is a duplex being: a fantastic creature who moves in the pure being of abstract thought, and on the other hand, a sometimes pitiful professorial figure which the former deposits, about as when one sets down a walking stick. When one reads the story of such a thinker's life (for his writings are perhaps excellent), one trembles to think of what it means to be a man.<sup>6</sup> If a lacemaker were to produce ever so beautiful lace, it nevertheless makes one sad to contemplate such a poor stunted creature. And so it is a comical sight to see a thinker who, in spite of all pretensions, personally existed like a nincompoop; who did indeed marry, but without knowing love or its power, and whose marriage must therefore have been as impersonal as his thought; whose personal life was devoid of pathos or pathological struggles, concerned only with the question of which university offered the best livelihood. Such an anomaly one would think impossible in the case of a thinker, to be met with only in the external world and its wretchedness, where one human being is the slave of another, and it is impossible to admire the lace without shedding tears for the lacemakers. But one would suppose that a thinker lived the richest human life – so at least it was in Greece.

It is different with the abstract thinker who without having understood himself, or the relationship that abstract thought bears to existence, simply follows the promptings of his talent or is made by training to become something of this sort. I am very well aware that one tends to admire an artistic career where the artist simply pursues his talent without at all making himself clear over what it means to be a human being, and that our admiration tends to forget the person of the artist over his artistry. But I also know that such a life has its tragedy in being a differential type of existence not personally reflected in the ethical; and I know that in Greece, at least, a thinker was not a stunted, crippled creature who produced works of art, but was himself a work of art in his existence.



One would suppose that being a thinker was the last thing in the world to constitute a differential trait with respect to being human. If it is the case that an abstract thinker is devoid of a sensitiveness for the comical, this circumstance is in itself a proof that while his thought may be the product of a distinguished talent, it is not the thought of one who has in any eminent sense existed as a human being. We are told that thought is the highest stage of human life, that it includes everything else as subordinated to itself; and at the same time no objection is urged against the thinker failing to exist essentially qua human being, but only as a differential talent. That the pronouncement made concerning thought fails to be reduplicated in the concept of the thinker, that the thinker's existence contradicts his thought, shows that we are here dealing merely with professions. It is professed that thought is higher than feeling and imagination, and this is professed by a thinker who lacks pathos and passion. Thought is higher than irony and humour – this is professed by a thinker who is wholly lacking in a sense for the comical. How comical! Just as the whole enterprise of abstract thought in dealing with Christianity and with existential problems is an essay in the comical, so the so-called pure thought is in general a psychological curiosity, a remarkable species of combining and construing in a fantastic medium, the medium of pure being. The facile deification of this pure thought as the highest stage in life shows that the thinker who does it has never existed qua human being. It is evidence among other things that he has never willed in any eminent sense of the word; I do not mean willing in the sense of exploit, but from the standpoint of inwardness. But to have willed in this eminent sense is an absolute condition for having existed as a human being. Through having willed in this manner, through having ventured to take a decisive step in the utmost intensity of subjective passion and with full consciousness of one's eternal responsibility (which is within the capacity of every human being), one learns something else about life, and learns that it is quite a different thing from being engaged, year in and year out, in piecing together something for a system. And through thus existing essentially qua human being, one also acquires a sensitiveness for the comical. I do not mean that everyone who so exists is therefore a comic poet or a comic actor, but he will have a receptivity for the comical.

That the difficulty inherent in existence and confronting the existing individual never really comes to expression in the language of abstraction I shall proceed to illustrate by reference to a decisive problem, about which so much has been said and written. Everyone is familiar with the fact that the Hegelian philosophy has rejected the principle of contradiction. Hegel himself has more than once sat in solemn judgment upon those thinkers who remain in the sphere of reflection and understanding, and therefore insist that there is an either-or. Since his time it has become a favourite sport for some Hegelian, as soon as anyone lets fall a hint

about an *aut-aut*, to come riding *trip trap trap*, like a gamekeeper in *Kallundsborgs-Krøniken*, and after gaining a victory to ride home again. Here in Denmark the Hegelians have several times been on the warpath, especially after Bishop Mynster, to gain the brilliant victory of speculative thought. Bishop Mynster has more than once become a vanquished standpoint, though as such he seems to be doing very well, and it is rather to be feared that the tremendous exertion incident to the winning of the victory has been too much for the unvanquished victors. And yet there is perhaps a misunderstanding at the root of the controversy and the victory. Hegel is utterly and absolutely right in asserting that viewed eternally, *sub specie aeterni*, in the language of abstraction, in pure thought and pure being, there is no either-or. How in the world could there be, when abstract thought has taken away the contradiction, so that Hegel and the Hegelians ought rather be asked to explain what they mean by the hocus-pocus of introducing contradiction, movement, transition, and so forth into the domain of logic? If the champions of an either-or invade the sphere of pure thought and there seek to defend their cause, they are quite without justification. Like the giant who wrestled with Hercules, and who lost strength as soon as he was lifted from the ground, the either-or of contradiction is *ipso facto* nullified when it is lifted out of the sphere of the existential and introduced into the eternity of abstract thought. On the other hand, Hegel is equally wrong when, forgetting the abstraction of his thought, he plunges down into the realm of existence to annul the double *aut* with might and main. It is impossible to do this in existence, for in so doing the thinker abrogates existence as well. When I take existence away, i.e. when I abstract, there is no *aut-aut*; when I take this *aut-aut* away from existence I also take existence away, and hence I do not abrogate the *aut-aut* in existence. If it is an error to say that there is something that is true in theology which is not true in philosophy, it is at any rate quite correct to say that something is true for an existing individual which is not true in abstract thought. And it is also true that from the ethical point of view, pure being is a fantastic medium, and that it is forbidden to an existing individual to forget that he exists.

One must therefore be very careful in dealing with a philosopher of the Hegelian school, and, above all, to make certain of the identity of the being with whom one has the honour to discourse. Is he a human being, an existing human being? Is he himself *sub specie aeterni*, even when he sleeps, eats, blows his nose, or whatever else a human being does? Is he himself the pure 'I am I'? This is an idea that has surely never occurred to any philosopher; but if not, how does he stand existentially related to this entity, and through what intermediate determinations is the ethical responsibility resting upon him as an existing individual suitably respected? Does he in fact exist? And if he does, is he then not

in process of becoming? And if he is in process of becoming, does he not face the future? And does he ever face the future by way of action? And if he never does, will he not forgive an ethical individuality for saying in passion and with dramatic truth that he is an ass? But if he ever acts *sensu eminenti*, does he not in that case face the future with infinite passion? Is there not then for him an either-or? Is it not the case that eternity is for an existing individual not eternity, but the future, and that eternity is eternity only for the Eternal, who is not in process of becoming? Let him state whether he can answer the following question, i.e. if such a question can be addressed to him: 'Is ceasing to exist so far as possible, in order to be *sub specie aeterni*, something that happens to him, or is it subject to a decision of the will, perhaps even something one ought to do?' For if I ought to do it, an *aut-aut* is established even with respect to being *sub specie aeterni*. Was he born *sub specie aeterni*, and has he lived *sub specie aeterni* ever since, so that he cannot even understand what I am asking about, never having had anything to do with the future, and never having experienced any decision? In that case I readily understand that it is not a human being I have the honour to address. But this does not quite end the matter; for it seems to me a very strange circumstance that such mysterious beings begin to make their appearance. An epidemic of cholera is usually signalized by the appearance of a certain kind of fly not otherwise observable; may it not be the case that the appearance of these fabulous pure thinkers is a sign that some misfortune threatens humanity, as, for instance, the loss of the ethical and the religious?

It is necessary to be thus careful in dealing with an abstract thinker who not only desires for himself to remain in the pure being of abstract thought, but insists that this is the highest goal for human life, and that a type of thought which leads to the ignoring of the ethical and a misunderstanding of the religious is the highest human thinking. But let us not on the other hand say that an *aut-aut* exists *sub specie aeterni*, where according to the Eleatic doctrine 'everything is and nothing comes into being'.<sup>7</sup> But where everything is in process of becoming, and only so much of eternity is present as to be a restraining influence in the passionate decision, where *eternity* is related as *futurity* to the individual in process of becoming, there the absolute disjunction belongs. When I put eternity and *becoming* together I do not get rest, but coming into being and futurity. It is undoubtedly for this reason that Christianity has announced eternity as the future life, namely, because it addresses itself to existing individuals, and it is for this reason also that it assumes an absolute either-or.

All logical thinking employs the language of abstraction, and is *sub specie aeterni*. To think existence logically is thus to ignore the difficulty, the difficulty, that is, of thinking the eternal as in process of becoming.

But this difficulty is unavoidable, since the thinker himself is in process of becoming. It is easier to indulge in abstract thought than it is to exist, unless we understand by this latter term what is loosely called existing, an analogy with what is loosely called being a subject. Here we have again an example of the fact that the simplest tasks are the most difficult. Existing is ordinarily regarded as no very complex matter, much less an art, since we all exist; but abstract thinking takes rank as an accomplishment. But really to exist, so as to interpenetrate one's existence with consciousness, at one and the same time eternal and as if far removed from existence, and yet also present in existence and in the process of becoming: that is truly difficult. If philosophical reflection had not in our time become something queer, highly artificial, and capable of being learned by rote, thinkers would make quite a different impression upon people, as was the case in Greece, where a thinker was an existing individual stimulated by his reflection to a passionate enthusiasm; and as was also once the case in Christendom, when a thinker was a believer who strove enthusiastically to understand himself in the existence of faith. If anything of this sort held true of the thinkers of our own age, the enterprise of pure thought would have led to one suicide after the other. For suicide is the only tolerable existential consequence of pure thought, when this type of abstraction is not conceived as something merely partial in relation to being human, willing to strike an agreement with an ethical and religious form of personal existence, but assumes to be all and highest. This is not to praise the suicide, but to respect the passion. Nowadays a thinker is a curious creature who during certain hours of the day exhibits a very remarkable ingenuity, but otherwise has nothing in common with a human being.

To think existence *sub specie aeterni* and in abstract terms is essentially to abrogate it, and the merit of the proceeding is like the much-trumpeted merit of abrogating the principle of contradiction. It is impossible to conceive existence without movement, and movement cannot be conceived *sub specie aeterni*. To leave movement out is not precisely a distinguished achievement, and to import it into logic in the form of the transition-category, and with it time and space, is only a new confusion. But inasmuch as all thought is eternal, there is here created a difficulty for the existing individual. Existence, like movement, is a difficult category to deal with; for if I think it, I abrogate it, and then I do not think it. It might therefore seem to be the proper thing to say that there is something which cannot be thought, namely, existence. But the difficulty persists, in that existence itself combines thinking with existing, in so far as the thinker exists.

Because Greek philosophy was not absent-minded, movement is perennially an object for its dialectical exertions. The Greek philosopher was an existing individual, and did not permit himself to forget that fact. In

order that he might devote himself wholly to thought, he therefore sought refuge in suicide, or in a Pythagorean dying from the world, or in a Socratic form of philosopher's death. He was conscious of being a thinker, but he was also aware that existence as his medium prevented him from thinking continuously, since existence involved him in a process of becoming. In order to be able to think in very truth, therefore, he took his own life. Modern philosophy from its lofty height smiles at such childishness; for just as surely as every modern thinker knows that thought and being are one, so he also knows that it is not worth while to be what one thinks.

It is on this point about existence, and the demand which the ethical makes upon each existing individual, that one must insist when an abstract philosophy and a pure thought assume to explain everything by explaining away what is decisive. It is necessary only to have the courage to be human, and to refuse to be terrified or tricked into becoming a phantom merely to save embarrassment. It would be an altogether different thing if pure thought would accept the responsibility of explaining its own relation to the ethical, and to the ethically existing individual. But this it never does, nor does it even pretend; for in that case it would have to make terms with an entirely different dialectic, namely, the Greek or existential dialectic. The stamp of the ethical is what every existing individual has the right to expect of all that calls itself wisdom. If a beginning has already been made, if an unnoticed transition permits a man gradually to forget that he exists in order to think *sub specie aeterni*, the objection is of a different order. It is not impossible that within the sphere of pure thought many, many objections may be urged against the Hegelian philosophy; but this would leave everything essentially unaltered. Willing as I am to admire Hegel's *Logic* in the capacity of a humble reader, by no means aspiring to a critical judgment; willing as I am to admit that there may be much for me to learn when I return to a further reading of it, I shall be equally proud, insistent, fearless and even defiant in standing by my thesis: that the Hegelian philosophy, by failing to define its relation to the existing individual, and by ignoring the ethical, confounds existence.

The most dangerous form of scepticism is always that which least looks like it. The notion that pure thought is the positive truth for an existing individual is sheer scepticism, for this positiveness is chimerical. It is a glorious thing to be able to explain the past, the whole of human history; but if the ability to understand the past is to be the summit of attainment for a living individual, this positiveness is scepticism, and a dangerous form of it, because of the deceptive quantity of things understood. Hence the terrible thing can happen to Hegel's philosophy, that an indirect attack is most dangerous. Let a doubting youth, an existing doubter, imbued with a lovable and unlimited youthful confidence in a hero of

thought, confidently seek in Hegel's positive philosophy the truth, the truth for existence: he will write a formidable epigram over Hegel. Please do not misunderstand me. I do not mean that every youth can vanquish Hegel, far from it; if the youth is conceited and foolish enough to attempt it, his attack will be without significance. No, the youth must not even think of attacking Hegel. On the contrary, let him submit himself unconditionally, in feminine devotion, but with sufficient vigour of determination to hold fast to his problem: he will become a satirist without suspecting it. The youth is an existing doubter. Hovering in doubt and without a foothold for his life, he reaches out for the truth – in order to exist in it. He is negative and the philosophy of Hegel is positive – what wonder then that he seeks anchorage in Hegel? But a philosophy of pure thought is for an existing individual a chimera, if the truth that is sought is something to exist in. To exist under the guidance of pure thought is like travelling in Denmark with the help of a small map of Europe, on which Denmark shows no larger than a steel pen-point – aye, it is still more impossible. The admiration and enthusiasm of the youth, his boundless confidence in Hegel, is precisely the satire upon Hegel. This is something that would long ago have been perceived if the prestige of pure thought had not been bolstered by an over-awing opinion, so that people have not dared to say that it is anything but excellent, and to avow that they have understood it – though this last is in a certain sense impossible, since this philosophy cannot help anyone to an understanding of himself, which is surely an absolute condition for all other kinds of understanding. Socrates said quite ironically that he did not know whether he was a human being or something else, but an Hegelian can say with due solemnity in the confessional: 'I do not know whether I am a human being – but I have understood the System.' I for my part would rather say: 'I know that I am a human being, and I know that I have not understood the System.' And having said so much quite simply, I will add that if any of our Hegelians will take pity on me and help me to an understanding of the System, there will be nothing in the way of hindrances interposed from my side. I shall strive to make myself as stupid as possible, so as not to have a single presupposition except my ignorance, only in order to be in a position to learn the more; and I shall strive to be as indifferent as possible over against every accusation directed against my lack of scientific training, merely to make sure of learning something.

It is impossible to exist without passion, unless we understand the word 'exist' in the loose sense of a so-called existence. Every Greek thinker was therefore essentially a passionate thinker. I have often reflected how one might bring a man into a state of passion. I have thought in this connection that if I could get him seated on a horse and the horse made to take fright and gallop wildly, or better still, for the sake of bringing the passion out, if I could take a man who wanted to arrive at a certain

place as quickly as possible, and hence already had some passion, and could set him astride a horse that can scarcely walk – and yet this is what existence is like if one is to become consciously aware of it. Or if a driver were otherwise not especially inclined towards passion, if someone hitched a team of horses to a wagon for him, one of them a Pegasus and the other a worn-out jade, and told him to drive – I think one might succeed. And it is just this that it means to exist, if one is to become conscious of it. Eternity is the winged horse, infinitely fast, and time is a worn-out jade; the existing individual is the driver. That is to say, he is such a driver when his mode of existence is not an existence loosely so called; for then he is no driver, but a drunken peasant who lies asleep in the wagon and lets the horses take care of themselves. To be sure, he also drives and is a driver; and so there are perhaps many who – also exist.

In so far as existence consists in movement there must be something which can give continuity to the movement and hold it together, for otherwise there is no movement. Just as the assertion that everything is true means that nothing is true, so the assertion that everything is in motion means that there is no motion.<sup>8</sup> The unmoved is therefore a constituent of the motion as its measure and its end. Otherwise the assertion that everything is in motion, and, if one also wishes to take time away, that everything is always in motion, is *ipso facto* the assertion of a state of rest. Aristotle, who emphasizes movement in so many ways, therefore says that God, himself unmoved, moves all. Now while pure thought either abrogates motion altogether, or meaninglessly imports it into logic, the difficulty facing an existing individual is how to give his existence the continuity without which everything simply vanishes. An abstract continuity is no continuity, and the very existence of the existing individual is sufficient to prevent his continuity from having essential stability; while passion gives him a momentary continuity, a continuity which at one and the same time is a restraining influence and a moving impulse. The goal of movement for an existing individual is to arrive at a decision, and to renew it. The eternal is the factor of continuity; but an abstract eternity is extraneous to the movement of life, and a concrete eternity within the existing individual is the maximum degree of his passion. All idealizing passion<sup>9</sup> is an anticipation of the eternal in existence functioning so as to help the individual to exist.<sup>10</sup> The eternity of abstract thought is arrived at by abstracting from existence. The realm of pure thought is a sphere in which the existing individual finds himself only by virtue of a mistaken beginning; and this error revenges itself by making the existence of the individual insignificant, and giving his language a flavour of lunacy. This seems to be the case with almost the entire mass of men in our day, when you rarely or never hear a person speak as if he were an existing individual human being, but rather as one

who sees everything in a dizzy pantheistic haze, forever talking about millions and whole nations and the historical evolution. But the passionate anticipation of the eternal is nevertheless not an absolute continuity for the existing individual; but it is the possibility of an approximation to the only true continuity that he can have. Here we are again reminded of my thesis that subjectivity is truth; for an objective truth is like the eternity of abstract thought, extraneous to the movement of existence.

Abstract thought is disinterested, but for an existing individual, existence is the highest interest. An existing individual therefore has always a *telos*, and it is of this *telos* that Aristotle speaks when he says (*De Anima*, III, 10, 2) that νοῦς θεωρητικός differs from νοῦς πράκτικος τῷ τέλει. But pure thought is altogether detached, and not like the abstract thought which does indeed abstract from existence, but nevertheless preserves a relationship to it. This pure thought, hovering in mystic suspension between heaven and earth and emancipated from every relation to an existing individual, explains everything in its own terms but fails to explain itself. It explains everything in such a fashion that no decisive explanation of the essential question becomes possible. Thus when an existing individual asks about the relationship between pure thought and an existing individual, pure thought makes no reply, but merely explains existence within pure thought and so confuses everything. It assigns to existence, the category upon which pure thought must suffer shipwreck, a place within pure thought itself; in this fashion everything that is said about existence is essentially revoked. When pure thought speaks of the immediate unity of reflection-in-self and reflection-in-other, and says that this immediate unity is abrogated, something must of course intervene so as to divide the two phases of this immediate unity. What can this something be? It is time. But time cannot find a place within pure thought. What then is the meaning of the talk about abrogation and transition and the new unity? And in general, what does it mean to think in such a manner as merely to pretend to think, because everything that is said is absolutely revoked? And what is the meaning of the refusal to admit that one thinks in this manner, constantly blazoning forth this pure thought as positive truth?

Just as existence has combined thought and existence by making the existing individual a thinker, so there are two media: the medium of abstract thought, and the medium of reality. But pure thought is still a third medium, quite recently discovered. It therefore begins, as the saying is, after the most exhaustive abstraction. The relation which abstract thought still sustains to that from which it abstracts is something which pure thought innocently or thoughtlessly ignores. Here is rest for every doubt, here is the eternal positive truth, and whatever else one may be pleased to say. That is, pure thought is a phantom. If the Hegelian philosophy has emancipated itself from every presupposition, it has won



this freedom by means of one lunatic postulate: the initial transition to pure thought.

Existence constitutes the highest interest of the existing individual, and his interest in his existence constitutes his reality. What reality is cannot be expressed in the language of abstraction. Reality is an *inter-esse* between the moments of that hypothetical unity of thought and being which abstract thought presupposes. Abstract thought considers both possibility and reality, but its concept of reality is a false reflection, since the medium within which the concept is thought is not reality, but possibility. Abstract thought can get hold of reality only by nullifying it, and this nullification of reality consists in transforming it into possibility. All that is said about reality in the language of abstraction and within the sphere of abstract thought is really said within the sphere of the possible. The entire realm of abstract thought, speaking in the language of reality, sustains the relation of possibility to the realm of reality; but this latter reality is not the one which is included within abstract thought and the realm of the possible. Reality or existence is the dialectical moment in a trilogy, whose beginning and whose end cannot be for the existing individual, since qua existing individual he is himself in the dialectical moment. Abstract thought closes up the trilogy. Just so. But how does it close the trilogy? Is abstract thought a mystic something, or is it not the act of the abstracting individual? But the abstracting individual is the existing individual, who is as such in the dialectical moment, which he cannot close or mediate, least of all absolutely, as long as he remains in existence. So that when he closes the trilogy, this closure must be related as a possibility to the reality or existence in which he remains. And he is bound to explain how he manages to do it, i.e. how he manages to do it as an existing individual; or else he must explain whether he ceases to be an existing individual, and whether he has any right to do this.

The moment we begin to ask this sort of question, we ask ethically, and assert the claim which the ethical has upon the existing individual. This claim is not that he should abstract from existence, but rather that he should exist; and this is at the same time his highest interest.

It is not possible for an existing individual, least of all *as* an existing individual, to hold fast absolutely a suspension of the dialectical moment, namely, existence. This would require a medium other than existence, which is the dialectical moment. If an existing individual can become conscious of such a suspension, it can be only as a possibility. But this possibility cannot maintain itself when the existential interest is posited, for which reason the awareness of it can exist only in a state of disinterestedness. But the existing individual can never wholly attain this state qua existing individual; and ethically he is not justified even in trying to attain it *approximando*, since the ethical seeks contrariwise to make the

existential interest infinite, so infinite that the principle of contradiction becomes absolutely valid.

Here again it appears, as was shown above, that the difficulty inherent in existence and confronting the existing individual is one which abstract thought does not recognize or treat. To think about the real in the medium of the possible does not involve the same difficulty as attempting to think it in the medium of existence, where existence and its process of becoming tend to prevent the individual from thinking just as if existence could not be thought, although the existing individual is a thinker. In pure thought we are over our ears in profundity, and yet there is something rather absent-minded about it all, because the pure thinker is not clear about what it means to be a human being.

All knowledge about reality is possibility. The only reality to which an existing individual may have a relation that is more than cognitive is his own reality, the fact that he exists; this reality constitutes his absolute interest. Abstract thought requires him to become disinterested in order to acquire knowledge; the ethical demand is that he become infinitely interested in existing.

The only reality that exists for an existing individual is his own ethical reality. To every other reality he stands in a cognitive relation; but true knowledge consists in translating the real into the possible.

The apparent trustworthiness of sense is an illusion. This was shown adequately as early as in Greek scepticism, and modern idealism has likewise demonstrated it. The trustworthiness claimed by a knowledge of the historical is also a deception, in so far as it assumes to be the very trustworthiness of reality; for the knower cannot know an historical reality until he has resolved it into a possibility. (On this point, more in what follows.) Abstract thought embraces the possible, either the preceding or the subsequent possibility; pure thought is a phantom.

The real subject is not the cognitive subject, since in knowing he moves in the sphere of the possible; the real subject is the ethically existing subject. An abstract thinker exists, to be sure, but this fact is rather a satire on him than otherwise. For an abstract thinker to try to prove his existence by the fact that he thinks is a curious contradiction; for in the degree that he thinks abstractly he abstracts from his own existence. In so far his existence is revealed as a presupposition from which he seeks emancipation; but the act of abstraction nevertheless becomes a strange sort of proof for his existence, since if it succeeded entirely his existence would cease. The Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* has often been repeated. If the 'I' which is the subject of *cogito* means an individual human being, the proposition proves nothing: 'I am thinking, *ergo* I am; but if I *am* thinking what wonder that I *am*': the assertion has already been made, and the first proposition says even more than the second. But if the 'I' in *cogito* is interpreted as meaning a particular existing human being,

philosophy cries: 'How silly; here there is no question of your self or my self, but solely of the pure ego.' But this pure ego cannot very well have any other than a purely conceptual existence; what then does the *ergo* mean? There is no conclusion here, for the proposition is a tautology.

It has been said above that the abstract thinker, so far from proving his existence by his thought, rather makes it evident that his thought does not wholly succeed in proving the opposite. From this to draw the conclusion that an existing individual who really exists does not think at all is an arbitrary misunderstanding. He certainly thinks, but he thinks everything in relation to himself being infinitely interested in existing. Socrates was thus a man whose energies were devoted to thinking; but he reduced all other knowledge to indifference in that he infinitely accentuated ethical knowledge. This type of knowledge bears a relation to the existing subject who is infinitely interested in existing.

The attempt to infer existence from thought is thus a contradiction. For thought takes existence away from the real and thinks it by abrogating its actuality, by translating it into the sphere of the possible. (Of this more in the following.) With respect to every reality other than the individual's own reality, the principle obtains that he can come to know it only by thinking it. With respect to his own reality, it is a question whether his thought can succeed in abstracting from it completely. This is what the abstract thinker aims at. But it avails him nothing, since he still exists; and this existential persistence, this sometimes pitiful professorial figure, is an epigram upon the abstract thinker, to say nothing of the insistent objection of the ethical.

In Greece, the philosopher was at any rate aware of what it means to exist. The so-called ataraxy of the sceptics was therefore an existential attempt to abstract from existence. In our time the process of abstracting from existence has been relegated to the printed page, just as the task of doubting everything is disposed of once for all on paper. One of the things that has given rise to so much confusion in modern philosophy is that the philosophers have so many brief sayings about infinite tasks, and respect this paper money among themselves, while it almost never occurs to anyone to try to realize the posited task. In this way everything is easily finished, and it becomes possible to begin without presuppositions. The presupposition of a universal doubt, for example, would require an entire human life; now, it is no sooner said than done.

The ethical reality of the individual is the only reality. That this should seem strange to many does not seem strange to me. To me it rather seems strange that the System, aye, even systems in the plural, have been completed without raising a question concerning the ethical. If we could only get the dialogue introduced again in the Greek manner, for the

purpose of testing what we know and what we do not know, the entire ingenious affectation that clusters about recent philosophy, its artificiality and unnaturalness, would soon disappear. It is not by any means my opinion that Hegel should be asked to talk with a day-labourer, and that it would prove anything if the latter could not be made to understand him; though it will always remain a beautiful eulogy upon Socrates, these simple words of Diogenes, that he philosophized in the workshops and in the market-place. But this is not what I mean, and my proposal does not in the slightest resemble an idler's attack on science. But let a philosopher of the Hegelian school or Hegel himself enter into conversation with a cultivated person, who has made himself competent dialectically through having existed, and from the very beginning all that is affected and chimerical will be frustrated. When a man writes or dictates paragraphs in a running stream, promising that everything will be made clear at the end, it becomes increasingly difficult to discover just where the confusion begins, and to find a fixed point of departure. By means of 'Everything will be made clear at the end', and intermittently by means of the category 'This is not the proper place to discuss this question', the very cornerstone of the System, often used as ludicrously as if one were to cite under the heading of misprints a single example, and then add, 'There are indeed other misprints in the book, but this is not the proper place to deal with them' – by means of these two phrases the reader is constantly defrauded, one of them cheating him definitely, the other intermediately. In the situation of the dialogue, however, this whole fantastic business of pure thought would lose all its plausibility. Instead of conceding the contention of idealism, but in such a manner as to dismiss as a temptation the entire problem of a reality in the sense of a thing-in-itself eluding thought, which like other temptations cannot be vanquished by giving way to it; instead of putting an end to Kant's misleading reflection which brings reality into connection with thought; instead of relegating reality to the ethical – Hegel scored a veritable advance; for he became fantastic and vanquished idealistic scepticism by means of pure thought, which is merely an hypothesis, and even if it does not so declare itself, a fantastic hypothesis. The triumphant victory of pure thought, that in it being and thought are one, is something both to laugh at and to weep over, since in the realm of pure thought it is not even possible to distinguish them. That thought has validity was assumed by Greek philosophy without question. By reflecting over the matter one would have to arrive at the same result; but why confuse the validity of thought with reality? A valid thought is a possibility, and every further question as to whether it is real or not should be dismissed as irrelevant.

The questionableness of the 'Method' becomes apparent already in Hegel's relation to Kant. A scepticism which attacks thought itself cannot

be vanquished by thinking it through, since the very instrument by which this would have to be done is in revolt. There is only one thing to do with such a scepticism, and that is to break with it. To answer Kant within the fantastic shadow-play of pure thought is precisely not to answer him. The only thing-in-itself which cannot be thought is existence, and this does not come within the province of thought to think. But how could pure thought possibly vanquish this difficulty, when it is abstract? And what does pure thought abstract from? Why, from existence, to be sure, and hence from that which it purports to explain.

When it is impossible to think existence, and the existing individual nevertheless thinks, what does this signify? It signifies that he thinks intermittently, that he thinks before and after. His thought cannot attain to absolute continuity. It is only in a fantastic sense that an existing individual can be constantly *sub specie aeterni*.

Is thinking identical with creation, with giving existence? I am well aware of what has been said by way of reply to a stupid attack on the philosophical principle of the identity of thought and being, and am entirely willing to concede its correctness. It has been insisted quite properly that this identity must not be understood as applying to existence of an imperfect order, as if, for example, I could produce a rose by thinking it. In the same spirit it has been pointed out, over against the defenders of the principle of contradiction, that the latter principle seems most valid in connection with existence of a lower order: before and behind, right and left, up and down, and so forth. But now in connection with existences of a higher order, does it hold true that thought and being are one? Does it hold, for example, in the case of the Ideas? Aye, Hegel is quite right, and yet we have not advanced a single step. The good, the beautiful, and the other Ideas are in themselves so abstract that they are indifferent to existence, indifferent to any other than a conceptual existence. The reason why the principle of identity holds in this connection is because being means in this case the same thing as thought. But since this is so, the answer offered by pure thought is an answer to a question which cannot be raised in the sphere of the answer. A particular existing human being is surely not an Idea, and his existence is surely something quite different from the conceptual existence of the Idea. An existence as a particular human being is doubtless an imperfection in comparison with the eternal life of the Idea, but it is a perfection in comparison with not existing at all. An intermediary state like existence would seem suitable for an intermediary being like man. How is it then with the supposed identity of thought and being in connection with the kind of existence that belongs to particular human beings? Am I the good because I think the good, or am I good because I think the good? The champions of the

philosophical principle of identity said themselves that it did not hold of the more imperfect existences: 'Is existence as a particular human being, which is what the question is about, the same with a perfect ideal existence?' Here it is the converse principle that holds: 'Because I exist and because I think, therefore I think that I exist.' Existence here separates thought from being, and breaks up their ideal unity. I must exist in order to think, and I must be able to think, for example the good, in order to exist in it.

Existence as a particular human being is not so imperfect an existence as the being of a rose, for example. Hence it is that we human beings are accustomed to say that however great our unhappiness, our existence is nevertheless a good: and I remember a melancholy individual who once in the midst of his sufferings, when he wished himself dead, asked himself upon seeing a basket of potatoes if he did not after all find more happiness in existence than a potato. But existence as a particular human being is not a pure ideal existence; it is only man in general who exists in that manner, which means that this entity does not exist at all. Existence is always something particular; the abstract does not exist. From this to draw the conclusion that the abstract is without validity is a misunderstanding; but it is also a misunderstanding to confound discourse by even raising the question of existence, or of reality in the sense of existence, in connection with the abstract. When an existing individual raises the question of the relation between thought and being, thinking and existing, and philosophy explains that it is one of identity, the answer does not reply to the question because it does not reply to the questioner. Philosophy explains: 'Thought and being are one; but not in connection with things that are what they are solely by virtue of existing, as for example a rose, which has no Idea within itself; and hence not in connection with things that make it most clearly evident what it means to exist, as opposed to what it means to think. But thought and being are one in connection with things whose existence is essentially indifferent, because they are so abstract as to have only conceptual existence.' To answer the question in this manner is to evade it; for the question had reference to existence as a particular human being. An existence of this sort is of a different order from the existence of a potato, but neither is it the kind of existence that attaches to an Idea. Human existence has Idea in it, but it is not a purely ideal existence. Plato placed the Idea in the second rank of existence, as intermediary between God and matter; an existing human being does indeed participate in the Idea, but he is not himself an Idea.

In Greece, as in the youth of philosophy generally, it was found difficult to win through to the abstract and to leave existence, which always gives the particular; in modern times, on the other hand, it has become difficult to reach existence. The process of abstraction is easy enough for us, but

we also desert existence more and more, and the realm of pure thought is the extreme limit of such desertion.

In Greece, philosophizing was a mode of action, and the philosopher was therefore an existing individual. He may not have possessed a great amount of knowledge, but what he did know he knew to some profit, because he busied himself early and late with the same thing. But nowadays, just what is it to philosophize, and what does a philosopher really know? For of course I do not deny that he knows everything.

The philosophical principle of identity is precisely the opposite of what it seems to be; it is the expression for the fact that thought has deserted existence altogether, that it has emigrated to a sixth continent where it is wholly sufficient to itself in the absolute identity of thought and being. We may finally reach the stage of identifying existence with evil, taken in a certain emasculated metaphysical sense; in the humorous sense, existence will become an extremely long dragging out of things, a ludicrous delay. But even so there remains a possibility that the ethical may impose some restraint, since it accentuates existence, and abstract thought and humour still retain a relationship to existence. But pure thought has won through to a perfect victory, and has nothing, nothing to do with existence.

If thought could give reality in the sense of actuality, and not merely validity in the sense of possibility, it would also have the power to take away existence, and so to take away from the existing individual the only reality to which he sustains a real relationship, namely, his own. (To the reality of another he stands related only by way of thought, as was shown above.) That is to say, the individual would have to be able to think himself out of existence, so that he would really cease to be. I venture to think that no one will wish to accept this supposition, which would betray as superstitious a faith in the power of pure thought as is conversely illustrated by the remark of a lunatic in a comedy, that he proposed to go down in the depths of Dovrefjeld and blow up the entire world with a syllogism. A man may be absent-minded by nature, or may become absent-minded through continuous absorption in pure thought. But the success is never complete, or rather, the failure is complete; and one becomes, by way of the 'sometimes pitiful professorial figure', what the Jews feared so much to become, namely, a proverb. I can abstract from myself; but the fact that I abstract from myself means precisely that I exist.

God does not think, he creates; God does not exist, he is eternal. Man thinks, and exists and existence separates thought and being, holding them apart from one another in succession.

What is abstract thought? It is thought without a thinker. Abstract thought ignores everything except the thought, and only the thought is, and is in its own medium. Existence is not devoid of thought, but in existence thought is in a foreign medium. What can it then mean to ask in the language of abstraction about reality in the sense of existence, seeing that abstract thought abstracts precisely from existence? What is concrete thought? It is thought with a relation to a thinker, and to a definite particular something which is thought, existence giving to the existing thinker thought, time and place.

If Hegel had published his *Logic* under the title of Pure Thought, without indication of authorship or date of publication, without preface or notes or didactic self-contradictions, without confusing explanations of things that might better have been allowed to explain themselves; if he had published it as a sort of analogy to the nature sounds heard on the island of Ceylon, as the immanent movements of pure thought itself – the act would have been in the spirit of a Greek philosopher. Had a Greek conceived such an idea, this is what he would have done. The reduplication of the content in the form is essential to all artistry, and it is particularly important to refrain from referring to the same content in an inadequate form. But as it now is, the *Logic* with its collection of notes makes as droll an impression on the mind as if a man were to show a letter purporting to have come from heaven, but having a blotter enclosed which only too clearly reveals its mundane origin. In such a work to indulge in polemics against this or that person designated by name, to communicate hints for the guidance of the reader, and so forth, is to betray the fact that there is a thinker who thinks the pure thought, a thinker whose speech mingles with its immanent movements, and who even speaks with another thinker, thus establishing relations with him. But if there is a thinker who thinks the pure thought, the entire apparatus of Greek dialectic as well as the safety police of the existential dialectic instantly lays hold of his person, seizing him by the coat-tails not as a disciple, but in order to find out about his relationship to pure thought. In that same instant the whole enchantment vanishes. Imagine Socrates in conversation with Hegel. With the help of the notes he will soon have Hegel on the hip; and as he was not accustomed to being put off by the assurance that everything will be made clear at the end, not even permitting a continuous speech lasting for five minutes, to say nothing of a continuous development lasting through seventeen volumes of print, he would put on the brakes with all his might – merely to tease Hegel.



## Notes

1 The frivolity with which systematists concede that Hegel has perhaps not been successful in introducing movement everywhere in logic, about as when a huckster thinks that a couple of oranges more or less is nothing to worry about when the purchase is a large one – this farcical complaisance is naturally an expression of contempt for Hegel, which not even his most violent antagonist has permitted himself. There have, of course, been logical attempts made before Hegel, but in his case the Method is supposed to be everything. For Hegel himself, and for everyone who is sufficiently alert intellectually to sense what it means to have willed something great, the fact that the fundamental principle supposed to underlie and interpenetrate the whole is not present at this point or that cannot be a matter of indifference, as when a huckster and his customer squabble over whether there is a little under- or over-weight. Hegel has staked all on this question of the Method. But a method has the remarkable trait of being nothing in the abstract; it is precisely in the application or execution that it is a method. Where it is unapplied, it is not the method, and if there is no other method, then there is no method at all. Let admirers of Hegel keep to themselves the privilege of making him out to be a bungler; an opponent will always know how to hold him in honour, as one who has willed something great, though without having achieved it.

2 It would take too much space here to show how. Very often the care and trouble taken in such matters proves to have been wasted; for after taking great pains to set forth an objection sharply, one is apt to learn from a philosopher's reply that the misunderstanding was not rooted in any inability to understand the divine philosophy, but in having persuaded oneself to think that it really meant something – instead of merely being loose thinking concealed behind pretentious expressions.

3 And if not ethical, it is in any case an aesthetic category, as when Plutarch says that some have assumed a single world because they feared that they would otherwise have an infinite and troublesome infinity of worlds on their hands. εἴθως ἀδριστεύου καὶ χαλεπῆς ἀπειρίας ὑπολαμβάνουσιν. *De defectu oraculorum*, xxii.

4 The reader will perhaps remember what has been said in the preceding: when the case becomes an objective one, the problem of an eternal happiness cannot arise, because such a happiness inheres precisely in subjectivity and its decisiveness.

5 That Hegel in his *Logic* nevertheless permits himself to utilize a consciousness that is only too well informed about the concrete, and what it is that the professor needs next in spite of the necessary transition, is of course a fault, which Trendelenburg has very effectively called to our attention. To cite an example from the field of the subject immediately before us, how is the transition effected by which *die Existenz* becomes a plurality of existences? 'Die Existenz ist die unmittelbare Einheit der Reflexion-in-sich und der Reflexion-in-anders. Sie ist daher (?) die unbestimmte Menge von Existierenden.' How does the purely abstract determination of existence come to be split up in this manner?

6 And when you read in his writings that thought and being are one, it is impossible not to think, in view of his own life and mode of existence, that the being which is thus identical with thought can scarcely be the being of a man.

7 Misled by the constant reference to a continued process in which opposites are combined into a higher unity, and so again in a higher unity and so forth, a parallel has been drawn between Hegel's doctrine and that of Heraclitus, which asserts that everything is in a state of flux and nothing remains constant. But this

is a misunderstanding, because everything said in Hegel's philosophy about process and becoming is illusory. This is why the System lacks an Ethic, and is the reason why it has no answer for the living when the question of becoming is raised in earnest, in the interest of action. In spite of all that Hegel says about process, he does not understand history from the point of view of becoming, but with the help of the illusion attaching to pastness understands it from the point of view of a finality that excludes all becoming. It is therefore impossible for a Hegelian to understand himself by means of his philosophy, for his philosophy helps him to understand only that which is past and finished, and a living person is surely not dead. He probably finds compensation in the thought that in comparison with an understanding of China and Persia and six thousand years of the world's history, a single individual does not much matter, even if that individual be himself. But it seems otherwise to me, and I understand it better conversely: when a man cannot understand himself, his understanding of China and Persia and the rest must surely be of a very peculiar kind.

8 This was undoubtedly what the disciple of Heraclitus meant when he said that one could not pass through the same river even once. Johannes *de silentio* made a reference in *Fear and Trembling* to the remark of this disciple, but more with a rhetorical flourish than with truth.

9 Earthly passion tends to prevent existence by transforming it into something merely momentary.

10 Art and poetry have been called anticipations of the eternal. If one desires to speak in this fashion, one must nevertheless note that art and poetry are not essentially related to an existing individual; for their contemplative enjoyment, the joy over what is beautiful, is disinterested, and the spectator of the work of art is contemplatively outside himself qua existing individual.

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## Towards a critique of Hegel's philosophy (1839)

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Ludwig Feuerbach

German speculative philosophy stands in direct contrast to the ancient Solomonic wisdom: whereas the latter believes that there is nothing new under the sun, the former sees nothing that is not new under the sun; whereas oriental man loses sight of differences in his preoccupation with unity, occidental man forgets unity in his preoccupation with differences; whereas oriental man carries his indifference to the eternally identical to the point of an imbecilic apathy, occidental man heightens his sensibility for the manifold to the feverish heat of the *imaginatio luxurians*. By German speculative philosophy, I mean that philosophy which dominates the present – the philosophy of Hegel. As far as Schelling's philosophy is concerned, it was really an exotic growth – the ancient oriental idea of identity on Germanic soil. If the characteristic inner movement of Schelling's school is towards the Orient, then the distinguishing feature of the Hegelian philosophy and school is their move towards the Occident combined with their belittlement of the Orient. The characteristic element of Hegel's philosophy as compared to the orientalism of the philosophy of identity is *difference*. In spite of everything, Hegel's philosophy of nature does not reach beyond the involutions of zoophytes and mollusca to which, as is known, acephales and gastropods also belong. Hegel elevated us to a higher stage, i.e. to the class of *articulata*, whose highest order is constituted by *insects*. Hegel's spirit is logical, determinate and – I would like to say – entomological; in other words, Hegel's is a spirit that finds its appropriate dwelling in a body with numerous protruding members and with deep fissures and sections. This spirit manifests itself particularly in its view and treatment of history. Hegel determines and presents only the most striking differences of various religions, philosophies, times and peoples, and in a progressive series of stages, but he ignores all that is common and identical in all of them. The form of both Hegel's conception and method is that of exclusive time alone, not that

of tolerant space; his system knows only *subordination* and *succession*; coordination and coexistence are unknown to it. To be sure, the last stage of development is always the *totality* that includes in itself the other stages, but since it itself is a definite temporal existence and hence bears the character of particularity, it cannot incorporate into itself other existences without sucking out the very marrow of their independent lives and without robbing them of the meaning which they can have only in complete freedom. The Hegelian method boasts of taking the same course as nature. It is true that it imitates nature, but the copy lacks the life of the original. Granted, nature has made man the master of animals, but it has given him not only hands to tame animals but also eyes and ears to admire them. The independence of the animal, which the cruel hand robs, is given back to it by sympathetic ears and eyes. The love of art breaks the chains that the self-interest of manual work puts around the animal. The horse that is weighed down under the groom's behind is elevated to an object of art by the painter, and the sable that is slain by the furrier for the purpose of turning its fur into a momentary ornament of human vanity is preserved by natural science so that it can be studied as a whole organism. Nature always combines the monarchical tendency of time with the liberalism of space. Naturally, the flower cancels the leaf, but would the plant be perfect if the flower only sat brightly on a leafless stem? True, some plants do shed their leaves in order to put all their energy into bringing forth the blossom, but there are other plants in which the leaf either appears later than the flower or simultaneously with it, which proves that any presentation of the totality of the plant requires the leaf as well as the flower. It is true that man is the truth of the animal, but would the life of nature, would the life of man itself be perfect if animals did not exist independently? Is man's relationship with animals only a despotic one? Do not the forsaken and the rejected find a substitute for the ingratitude, scheming and unfaithfulness of their fellow human beings in the faithfulness of the animal? Does the animal not have a power that consoles and heals his broken heart? Is not a good, rational sense also part of animal cults? Could it not be that we regard these cults as ludicrous because we have succumbed to an idolatry of a different kind? Does not the animal speak to the heart of the child in fables? Did not a mere donkey once open the eyes of an obdurate prophet?

The stages in the development of nature have, therefore, by no means only a *historical* meaning. They are, indeed, moments, but moments of a simultaneous totality of nature and not of a *particular* and *individual* totality which itself would only be a moment of the universe, that is, of the totality of nature. However, this is not the case with the philosophy of Hegel, in which only time, not space, belongs to the form of intuition. Here, totality or the absoluteness of a particular historical phenomenon

or existence is vindicated as predicate, thus reducing the stages of development as independent entities only to a historical meaning; although living, they continue to exist as nothing more than shadows or movements, nothing more than homoeopathic drops on the level of the *absolute*. In this way, for example, Christianity – and, to be sure, taken in its historical-dogmatic development – is determined as *absolute* religion. In the interest of such a determination, however, only the difference of Christianity from other religions is accentuated, thus neglecting all that is common to all of them: that is, the *nature* of religion, which, as the only absolute condition, lies at the base of all the different religions. The same is true of philosophy. The Hegelian philosophy, I mean the philosophy of *Hegel*, that is to say, a philosophy that is after all a particular and definite philosophy having an empirical existence – we are not concerned here with the character of its content – is defined and proclaimed as *absolute* philosophy; i.e. as nothing less than *philosophy itself*, if not by the master himself, then certainly by his disciples – at least by his orthodox disciples – and certainly quite consistently and in keeping with the teaching of the master. Thus, recently, a Hegelian – and a sagacious and thoughtful person at that – has sought to demonstrate – ceremoniously and, in his own way, thoroughly – that the Hegelian philosophy ‘is the *absolute reality of the idea* of philosophy’.

But however sagacious the author is otherwise, he proceeds from the very outset uncritically in so far as he does not pose the question: is it at all *possible* that a species realizes itself in *one* individual, art as such in *one* artist, and philosophy as such in one philosopher? And yet this is the main question; for what use to me are all the proofs that *this* particular person is the messiah when I do not believe at all that any messiah ever will, could or must appear? Hence, if this question is not raised, it is quietly taken for granted that there must and does exist an aesthetic or speculative Dalai Lama, an aesthetic or speculative transubstantiation and an aesthetic or speculative Day of Judgment. It is just this presupposition, however, that contradicts reason. ‘Only all men taken together’, says Goethe, ‘cognize nature, and only all men taken together live human nature.’ How profound – and what is more – how true! Only love, admiration, veneration, in short, only passion makes the individual into the species. For example, in moments when, enraptured by the beautiful and lovable nature of a person, we exclaim: he is beauty, love and goodness incarnate. Reason, however, knows nothing – keeping in mind the Solomonic wisdom that there is nothing new under the sun – of a real and absolute incarnation of the species in a particular individuality. It is true that the spirit or the consciousness is ‘species existing as species’, but, no matter how universal, the individual and his head – the organ of the spirit – are always designated by a definite kind of nose, whether pointed or snub, fine or gross, long or short, straight or bent. Whatever

enters into time and space must also subordinate itself to the laws of time and space. The god of limitation stands guard at the entrance to the world. Self-limitation is the condition of entry. Whatever becomes real becomes so only as something determined. The incarnation of the species with all its plenitude into *one* individuality would be an absolute miracle, a violent suspension of all the laws and principles of reality; it would, indeed, be the *end of the world*.

Obviously, therefore, the belief of the Apostles and early Christians in the approaching end of the world was intimately linked with their belief in incarnation. Time and space are *actually already* abolished with the manifestation of the divinity in a particular time and form, and hence there is nothing more to expect but the *actual end* of the world. It is no longer possible to conceive the possibility of history; it no longer has a meaning and goal. *Incarnation* and *history* are absolutely incompatible; when deity itself enters into history, history ceases to exist. But if history nevertheless continues in the same way as before, then the theory of incarnation is in reality nullified by history itself. The manifestation of the deity, which is only a report, a narration for other later times – and hence only an object of imagination and recollection – has lost the mark of divinity, and relinquishing its miraculous and extraordinary status, it has placed itself on an equal footing with the other, ordinary phenomena of history in as much as it is itself *reproduced* in later times in a *natural* way. The moment it becomes the object of narration, it *ceases* to be a miracle. It is therefore not without reason that people say that time betrays all secrets. Consequently, if a historical phenomenon were actually the manifestation or incarnation of the deity, then it must extinguish – and this alone would be its proof – all the lights of history, particularly church lights, as the sun puts out the stars and the day nocturnal lights; then it must illuminate the whole earth with its rapturous divine effulgence and be for all men in all times an absolute, omnipresent and immediate manifestation. For what is supernatural must also act *as such beyond all limits of time*; and hence, what reproduces itself in a natural way – maintains itself only through the medium of either oral or written tradition – is only of mediated origin and integrated into a natural context.

The situation is the same with the theories of incarnation in the field of art and science. If Hegelian philosophy were the absolute reality of the idea of philosophy, then the immobility of reason in the Hegelian philosophy must necessarily result in the immobility of time; for if time still sadly moved along as if nothing had happened, then the Hegelian philosophy would unavoidably forfeit its attribute of absoluteness. Let us put ourselves for a few moments in future centuries! Will not the Hegelian philosophy then be chronologically a foreign and *transmitted* philosophy to us? Will it be possible for us then to regard a philosophy from other times, a philosophy of the past, as *our* contemporary philosophy? How

else do philosophies pass if it is not because men and epochs pass and posterity wants to live not by the heritage of its ancestors but by the riches acquired by itself? Will we therefore not regard the Hegelian philosophy as an oppressive burden just as medieval Aristotle once was to the Age of Reformation? Will not an opposition of necessity arise between the old and the new philosophy, between the unfree – because traditional – and free – because self-acquired – philosophy? Will not Hegelian philosophy be relegated from its pinnacle of the absolute reality of the Idea to the modest position of a particular and definite reality? But is it not rational, is it not the duty and task of the thinking man to anticipate through reason the necessary and unavoidable consequences of time, to know in advance from the nature of things what will one day automatically result from the nature of time?

Anticipating the future with the help of reason, let us therefore undertake to demonstrate that the Hegelian philosophy is really a definite and special kind of philosophy. The proof is not difficult to find, however much this philosophy is distinguished from all previous philosophies by its rigorous scientific character, universality, and incontestable richness of thought. Hegelian philosophy was born at a time when mankind stood, as at any other time, on a definite level of thought, when a definite kind of philosophy was in existence. It drew on this philosophy, linked itself with it, and hence it must itself have a definite, i.e. finite, character. Every philosophy originates, therefore, as a manifestation of its time; its origin *presupposes its historical time*. Of course, it appears to *itself* as not resting on any presuppositions; and, in relation to earlier systems, that is certainly true. A later age, nevertheless, is bound to realize that this philosophy was after all based on certain presuppositions, i.e. certain accidental presuppositions which have to be distinguished from those that are *necessary* and *rational* and cannot be negated without involving absolute nonsense. But is it really true that the Hegelian philosophy does not begin with any presuppositions? 'Yes! It proceeds from pure Being; it does not start from a *particular* point of departure, but from that which is purely indeterminate; it starts from that which is itself the beginning.' Is that really so? And is it not after all a presupposition that philosophy has to begin at all? 'Well, it is quite obvious that everything must have a beginning, philosophy not excepted.' Quite true! But 'beginning' here has the sense of accidental or indifferent; in philosophy, on the other hand, beginning has a *particular* meaning, the meaning of the first principle in itself as required by philosophical science. But what I would like to ask is: why should beginning be taken in this sense? Is the notion of beginning not itself subject to criticism? Is it immediately true and universally valid? Why should it not be possible for me to abandon at the start the notion of beginning and, instead, turn directly to that which is real? Hegel starts from Being, i.e. the notion of Being or abstract Being.

Why should I not be able to start from Being itself, i.e. real Being? Or, again, why should I not be able to start from reason, since Being, in so far as it is thought of and in so far as it is an object of logic, immediately refers me back to reason? Do I still start from a presupposition when I start from reason? No! I cannot doubt reason and abstract from it without declaring at the same time that both doubting and abstracting do not partake of reason. But even conceding that I do base myself on a presupposition that my philosophizing starts directly from real Being or reason without at all being concerned with the whole question of a beginning, what is so harmful about that? Can I not prove later that the presupposition I had based myself on was only formally and apparently so, that in reality it was none at all? I certainly do not begin to think just at the point when I put my thoughts on paper. I already know how the subject matter of my thinking would develop. I presuppose something because I know that what I presuppose would justify itself through itself.

Can it therefore be said that the starting point taken by the Hegelian philosophy in the *Logic* is a general and an absolutely necessary starting point? Is it not rather a starting point that is itself determined, that is to say, determined by the standpoint of philosophy before Hegel? Is it not itself tied up with (Fichte's) *Theory of Science*? Is it not connected with the old question as to the first principle of philosophy and with that philosophical viewpoint which was essentially interested in a formal system rather than in reality? Is it not linked with the first question of all philosophy: what is the first principle? Is this connection not proved by the fact that the method of Hegel – disregarding, of course, the difference of content which also becomes the difference of form – is *essentially*, or at least generally, the method of Fichte? Is this not also the course described by the *Theory of Science* that that which is at first *for us* is in the end also *for itself*, that therefore the end returns to the beginning, and that the course taken by philosophical science is a circle? Is it not so that the circular movement, and indeed taken literally, becomes an inner need or a necessary consequence where method, i.e. the *presentation* of philosophy, is taken to be the essence of philosophy itself, where anything that is not a system (taken here in its narrow sense) is not philosophy at all? For only that which is a completed circle is a system, which does not just go on *ad infinitum*, but whose end rather returns to its beginning. The Hegelian philosophy is actually the most perfect *system* that has ever appeared. Hegel actually achieved what Fichte aspired to but did not achieve, because he concluded with an 'ought' and not with an end that is also beginning. And yet, systematic thought is by no means the same as *thought as such*, or *essential* thought; it is only *self-presenting* thought. To the extent that I present my thoughts, I place them in time; an insight that contains all its successive moments within a simultaneity in my mind now becomes a sequence. I posit that



which is to be presented as not existing, and let it be born under my very eyes; I abstract from what it is prior to its presentation. Whatever I therefore posit as a beginning is, in the first instance, that which is purely indeterminate; indeed, I know nothing about it, for self-presenting knowledge has yet to become knowledge. Hence, strictly speaking, I can start only from the notion of a starting point; for whatever object I may posit, initially it will always have the nature of a starting point. In this regard, Hegel is much more consistent and exact than Fichte with his clamorous 'I'. But given that the starting point is indeterminate, then moving onward must mean determining. Only during the course of the movement of presentation does that from which I start come to determine and manifest itself. Hence, progression is at the same time retrogression – I return whence I started. In retrogression I retract progression, i.e. temporalization of thought: I restore the lost identity. But the first principle to which I return is no longer the initial, indeterminate and unproved first principle; it is now mediated and therefore no longer the same or, even granting that it is the same, no longer in the same form. This process is of course well founded and necessary, although it rests only on the relationship of self-manifesting and self-presenting thought to thought in itself, i.e. to inner thought. Let us put it in the following way. I read the *Logic* of Hegel from beginning to end. At the end I return to the beginning. The idea of the Idea or the Absolute Idea contains in itself the idea of Essence, the idea of Being. I therefore know now that Being and Essence are moments of the Idea, or that the Absolute Idea is the *Logic in nuce*. Of course, at the end I return to the beginning, but, let us hope, *not in time*, that is, not in a way that would make me begin with the *Logic* all over again; for otherwise I would be necessitated to go the same way a second and a third time and so on with the result that my whole life will have become a circular movement within the Hegelian *Logic*. I would rather close the three volumes of the *Logic* once I have arrived at its end – the Absolute Idea – because I will then *know* what it contains. In the knowledge that I now have, I cancel the temporal process of mediation; I know that the Absolute Idea is the Whole, and I naturally need time to be able to realize for myself its processual form; however, this order of succession is completely indifferent here. The *Logic* in three volumes, i.e. the worked-out *Logic*, is not a goal *in itself*, for otherwise I would have no other goal in life than to go on reading it or to memorize it as a 'paternoster'. Indeed, the Absolute Idea itself retracts its process of mediation, *encompasses* this process *within itself*, and nullifies the reality of presentation in that it shows itself to be the first and the last, the one and all. And for this very reason, I, too, now shut the *Logic* and concentrate its spread into one idea. In the end, the *Logic* leads us, therefore, back to *ourselves*, i.e. to our inner act of cognition; mediating and self-constituting knowledge becomes *unmediated*

knowledge, but not unmediated in the subjective sense of Jacobi, because there is no unmediated knowledge in that sense. I mean a different kind of unmediatedness.

To the extent to which it is *self-activity*, thinking is an *unmediated* activity. No one else can think for me; only *through myself* do I convince myself of the truth of a thought. Plato is meaningless and non-existent for someone who lacks understanding; he is a blank sheet to one who cannot link ideas that correspond with his words. Plato in writing is only a *means* for me; that which is primary and *a priori*, that which is the *ground* to which all is ultimately referred, is understanding. To bestow understanding does not lie in the power of philosophy, for understanding is presupposed by it; philosophy only shapes my understanding. The *creation* of concepts on the basis of a particular kind of philosophy is not a real but only a formal creation; it is not creation out of nothing, but only the development, as it were, of a spiritual matter lying within me that is as yet indeterminate but, nevertheless, capable of assuming all determinations. The philosopher produces in me only the awareness of what I can know; he fastens on to my mental ability. In this sense, philosophy, issuing either from the mouth or the pen, goes back directly to its own *source*; it does not speak in order to speak – hence its antipathy against all pretty talk – but in order *not* to speak, that is, in order to *think*; it does not demonstrate – hence its contempt for all sophistic syllogistics – but only to show that what it demonstrates is *simply* in keeping with the very *principle* of all demonstration and reason, and that it is stringent thought, i.e. a thought that expresses to every thinking person a law of reason. To demonstrate is to show that what I am *saying* is *true*, is to lead expressed thought back to its source. The meaning of demonstration cannot, therefore, be grasped without reference to the meaning of *language*. Language is nothing other than the *realization of the species*, i.e. the ‘I’ is mediated with the ‘You’ in order, by eliminating their individual separateness, to manifest the unity of the species. Now, the element in which the word exists is air, the most spiritual and general medium of life. A demonstration has its ground only in the mediating activity of thought *for others*. Whenever I wish to prove something, I do so for others. When I prove, teach or write, then I do so, I hope, not for myself; for I also know, at least in essentials, what I do not write, teach and discuss. This is also the reason why one often finds it most difficult to write about something which one knows best, which is so perfectly certain and clear to oneself that one cannot understand why others should not know it as well. A writer who is so certain of the object he is to write about that he would not even take the trouble to write about it falls into a category of humour that is in a class by itself. He defeats the purpose of writing through writing, and jokes about proofs in his proofs. If I am to write and, indeed, write well and in a fundamental

way, then I must doubt that the others know what I know, or at least that they know it in the same way as I do. Only because of that can I communicate my thoughts. But I also presuppose that they should and *can* know them. To teach is not to drum things into a person; rather, the teacher applies himself to an active capacity, to a capacity to learn. The artist presupposes a sense of beauty – he cannot bestow it upon a person – for in order that we take his works to be beautiful, in order that we accept and countenance them at all, he must presuppose in us a sense of art. All he can do is to cultivate it and give it a certain direction. Similarly, the philosopher does not assume that he is a speculative Dalai Lama, that he is the incarnation of reason itself. In order that we recognize his thoughts as true, in order that we understand them at all, he presupposes reason, as a common principle and measure in us as well as in himself. That which he has learned we should also be able to know, and that which he has found we should also be able to find *in ourselves* with the help of our own thinking. Demonstration is therefore not a mediation through the medium of language between thought, in so far as it is *my thought*, and the thought of another person, in so far as it is his thought – where two or three people assemble in my name, I, reason, and truth am there among you – not is it a mediation of ‘I’ and ‘You’ to know the identity of reason, nor, again, a mediation through which I verify that my thought is not mine, but is rather thought *in and for itself* so that it can just as well be mine as that of someone else. If we are indifferent in life as to whether our thoughts are understood and acknowledged, then this indifference is shown only to this or that man or to this or that class of men because we regard them as people who are full of prejudices, corrupted by particular interests and feelings, incorrigible. Their number does not matter here at all. It is of course true that man can be self-sufficient because he knows himself to be a whole, because he distinguishes himself from himself, and because he can be the other to himself; man speaks to and converses with himself, and because he knows that his thought would not be his own if it were also not – at least as a possibility – the thought of others. But all this indifference, all this self-sufficiency and self-concern are only exceptional phenomena. In reality, we are not indifferent; the urge to communicate is a fundamental urge – the urge for truth. We become conscious and certain of truth only through the other, even if not through this or that accidental other. That which is true belongs neither to me nor exclusively to you, but is common to all. The thought in which ‘I’ and ‘You’ are united is a *true* thought. This unification is the confirmation, sign and affirmation of truth only because it is itself already the truth. That which unites is true and good. The objection that, hence, theft too is true and good because here, too, men are united does not deserve to be refuted. In this case, each is only for himself.

All philosophers we know have *expressed* – i.e. *taught* – their ideas either orally, like Socrates, or in written form; otherwise they could not have become known to us. To express *thoughts* is to teach; but to teach is to demonstrate the truth of that which is taught. This means that demonstrating is not just a relationship of the thinker to himself or of a thought that is imprisoned within itself to itself, but the relationship of the thinker to others. Hence, the forms of demonstration and inference cannot be the *forms of reason*<sup>1</sup> as such, i.e. forms of an inner act of thought and cognition. They are only *forms of communication*, modes of expression, representations, conceptions; in short, forms in which thought manifests itself. That is why a quick-witted person can be ahead of his demonstrating teacher; even with the first thought, he anticipates in no time the ensuing sequence of deductions which another person must go through step by step. A genius for thinking is just as much innate to man, and exists just as much to a certain degree in all men – in the form of receptivity – as a genius for art. The reason why we regard the forms of communication and expression as the basic forms of reason and thought lies in the fact that, in order to raise them to the clarity of consciousness, we present our fundamental thoughts to ourselves in the same way as we present them to another person, that we first teach ourselves these fundamental thoughts which directly spring from our genius for thinking – they come to us we know not how – and which are perhaps innate to our being. In short, the reason lies in the fact that we express and articulate our thoughts in thought itself. Demonstrating is therefore only the means through which I strip my thought of the form of ‘mine-ness’ so that the other person may recognize it as his own. Demonstrating would be senseless if it were not also *communicating*. However, the communicating of thoughts is not material or *real* communication. For example, a push, a sound that shocks my ears, or light is real communication. I am only passively receptive to that which is material; but I become aware of that which is mental only through myself, only through self-activity. For this very reason, what the person demonstrating communicates is not the *subject matter itself*, but only the medium; for he does not instil his thoughts into me like drops of medicine, nor does he preach to deaf fishes like Saint Francis; rather, he addresses himself to *thinking* beings. The main thing – the understanding of the thing involved – he does not give me; he *gives* nothing at all – otherwise the philosopher could really produce philosophers, something which so far no one has succeeded in achieving. Rather, he presupposes the faculty of understanding; he shows me – i.e. to the other person as such – my understanding only in a mirror. He is only an actor, i.e. he only embodies and represents what I should reproduce in myself in imitation of him. Self-constituting and systematic philosophy is dramatic and theatrical philosophy as opposed to the poetry of introspective material thought. The person

demonstrating says and points out to me: 'This is rational, this is true, and this is what is meant by law; this is how you must think when you think truly.' To be sure, he wants me to grasp and acknowledge his ideas, but not as his ideas; he wants me to grasp them as generally rational, i.e. also as mine. He only expresses what is my own understanding. Herein lies the justification for the demand that philosophy should awaken, stimulate thought, and not make us the captives of its oral or written word – a communicated thought is precisely thought externalized into word – which always has a mentally deadening effect. Every presentation of philosophy, whether oral or written, is to be taken and can only be taken in the sense of a means. Every system is only an expression or image of reason, and hence only an object of reason, an object which reason – a living power that procreates itself in new thinking beings – distinguishes from itself and posits as an object of criticism. Every system that is not recognized and appropriated as just a *means limits* and warps the mind, for it sets up the indirect and formal thought in the place of the direct, original and material thought. It kills the spirit of invention; it makes it impossible to distinguish the *spirit* from the *letter*, for together with the thought – herein lies the limitation of every system as something external – it also *necessarily* insists on retaining the word, thus failing to capture, indeed denying completely the original meaning and determination of, every system and expression of thought. All presentation, all demonstration – and the presentation of thought is demonstration – has, according to its *original* determination – and that is all that matters to us – the cognitive activity of the other person as its ultimate aim.

Moreover, it is quite obvious that presentation or demonstration is also an end *for itself*, since every means must, in the first instance, be an end. The form must itself be instructive, that is, objectively expressed. The presentation of philosophy must itself be philosophical – the demand for the identity of form and content finds herein its justification. The presentation is, of course, *systematic* to the extent to which it is itself philosophical. By virtue of being so, the presentation comes to have a value *in and for itself*. For that reason the systematizer is an artist – the history of philosophical system is the picture gallery of reason. Hegel is the most accomplished philosophical artist, and his presentations, at least in part, are *unsurpassed models of scientific art sense* and, because of their rigour, *veritable means for the education and discipline of the spirit*. But precisely because of this, Hegel – in keeping with a general law which we cannot discuss here – made form into essence, the being of thought for others into being in itself, the *relative goal* into the *final goal*. Hegel, in his presentation, aimed at anticipating and imprisoning the intellect itself and compressing it into the system. The system was supposed to be, as it were, reason itself; all immediate activity was to dissolve itself completely in mediated activity, and the presentation of philosophy was *not to pre-*

*suppose anything*, that is, nothing was to be left over in us and nothing within us – a complete emptying of ourselves. The Hegelian system is the *absolute self-externalization* of reason, a state of affairs that expresses itself, among other things, in the fact that the empirical character of his natural law is pure speculation. The true and ultimate reason for all complaints about formalism, neglect of subjectivity etc. lies solely in the fact that Hegel compresses everything into his presentation, that he proceeds abstractly from the pre-existence of the intellect, and that he does not appeal to the intellect within us. It is true that Hegel retracts the process of mediation in what he calls the result, but in so far as form is posited as objective essence, one is again left in doubt as to the objectivity or subjectivity of the process of mediation. Hence, those who claim that the process of the mediation of the Absolute is only a formal one may well be materially right, but those who claim the opposite, that is, those who claim objective reality for this process, may not, at least formally, be in the wrong.

The Hegelian philosophy is thus the culminating point of all speculative-systematic philosophy. With this, we have discovered and mooted the reason underlying the beginning of the *Logic*. Everything is required either to present (prove) itself or to flow into, and be dissolved in, the presentation. The presentation ignores that which was known before the presentation: it must make an absolute beginning. But it is precisely here that the limits of the presentation manifest themselves immediately. Thought is prior to the presentation of thought. That which constitutes the starting point within the presentation is primary only for the presentation but not for thought. The presentation needs thought which, although always present within thinking, emerges only later.<sup>2</sup> The presentation is that which is mediated in and for itself; what is primary is therefore never immediate even within the presentation, but only posited, dependent and mediated, in that it is determined by the determinations of thought whose certainty is self-dependent and which are prior to and independent of a philosophy presenting and unfolding itself in time. Thus, presentation always appeals to a higher authority – and one which is *a priori* in relation to it. Who would think that this is not also the case with the 'being' of the Hegelian *Logic*? 'Being is that which is immediate, indeterminate, self-same, self-identical and undifferentiated.' But are not the notions of immediacy and identity presupposed here? 'Being merges into Nothingness; it disappears immediately into its opposite: its truth is the very movement of its disappearing.' Does Hegel not take perceptions for granted here? Is disappearing a notion, or is it rather a sensuous perception? 'Becoming is restlessness, the restless unity of being and nothingness; existence is this unity having come to rest.' Is not a highly doubtful perception simply taken for granted here? Can a sceptic not object that rest is a sensory illusion, that everything is rather in constant

motion? What, therefore, is the use of putting such ideas at the starting point, even if only as *images*? But it may be objected that such assumptions as the notions of sameness and identity are quite evident and natural. How else could we conceive of being? These notions are the necessary means through which we cognize being as primary. Quite right! But is being, at least for us, immediate? Is it not rather that wherefrom we cannot abstract the Primary? Of course, the Hegelian philosophy is aware of this as well. Being, whence the *Logic* proceeds, presupposes on the one hand the *Phenomenology*, and on the other, the Absolute Idea. Being (that which is primary and indeterminate) is revoked in the end as it turns out that it is *not* the *true* starting point. But does this not again make a *Phenomenology* out of the *Logic*? And being only a *phenomenological* starting point? Do we not encounter a conflict between appearance and truth within the *Logic* as well? Why does Hegel not proceed from the true starting point? 'Indeed, the true can only be a result; the true has to prove itself to be so, that is, it has to present itself.' But how can it do so if being itself has to presuppose the Idea, that is, when the Idea has already in itself been presupposed as the Primary? Is this the way for philosophy to constitute and demonstrate itself as the truth so that it can no longer be doubted, so that scepticism is reduced once and for all to absurdity? Of course, if you say A, you will also have to say B. Anyone who can countenance being at the beginning of the *Logic* will also countenance the Idea; if this being has been accepted as proved by someone, then he must also accept the Idea as proved. But what happens if someone is not willing to say A? What if he says instead, 'Your indeterminate and pure being is just an abstraction to which nothing real corresponds, for real is only real being? Or else prove if you can the reality of *general* notions!' Do we not thus come to those general questions that touch upon the truth and reality not only of Hegel's *Logic* but also of philosophy altogether? Is the *Logic* above the dispute between the Nominalists and Realists (to use old names for what are natural contraries)? Does it not contradict in its first notions sense perception and its advocate, the intellect? Have they no right to oppose the *Logic*? The *Logic* may well dismiss the voice of sense perception, but, then, the *Logic* itself is dismissed by the intellect on the ground that it is like a judge who is trying his own case. Have we therefore not the same contradiction right at the outset of the philosophical science as in the philosophy of Fichte? In the latter case, the contradiction is between the *pure* and the empirical, real ego; in the former, it is between the pure and the empirical, real being. 'The pure ego is no longer an ego'; but, then, the pure and empty being, too, is no longer being. The *Logic* says: 'I abstract from determinate being; I do not predicate of determinate being the unity of being and nothingness.' When this unity appears to the intellect as paradoxical and ridiculous, it quickly substitutes

determinate being by pure being, for now it would of course be a contradiction for being not to be nothingness as well. But the intellect retorts: 'Only determinate being is being; in the notion of being lies the notion of absolute determinateness. I take the notion of being from being itself; however, all being is determinate being – that is why, in passing, I can also posit nothingness which means "not something" or "opposed to being" because I always and inseparably connect "something" with being. If you therefore leave out determinateness from being, you leave being with no being at all. It will not be surprising if you then demonstrate that indeterminate being is nothingness. Under these circumstances this is self-evident. If you exclude from man that which makes him man, you can demonstrate without any difficulty whatsoever that he is not man. But just as the notion of man from which you have excluded the specific difference of man is not a notion of man, but rather of a fabricated entity as, for example, the Platonic man of Diogenes, so the notion of being from which you have excluded the content of being is no longer the notion of being. Being is diverse in the same measure as things. Being is one with the thing that is. Take away being from a thing, and you take away everything from it. It is impossible to think of being in separation from specific determinations. Being is not a particular notion; to the intellect at least, it is all there is.'

Therefore, how can the *Logic*, or any particular philosophy at all, reveal truth and reality if it begins by contradicting sensuous reality and its understanding *without resolving this contradiction*? That it can prove *itself* to be true is not a matter of doubt; this, however, is not the question. A twosome is needed to prove something. While proving, the thinker splits himself into two; he contradicts himself, and only after a thought has been and has overcome its own opposition can it be regarded as proved. To prove is at the same time to refute. Every intellectual determination has its antithesis, its contradiction. Truth exists not in unity with, but in refutation of its opposite. Dialectics is not a monologue that speculation carries on with itself, but a dialogue between speculation and empirical reality. A thinker is a dialectician only in so far as he is his own *opponent*. The zenith of art and of one's own power is to doubt oneself. Hence, if philosophy or, in our context, the *Logic* wishes to prove itself true, it must refute rational empiricism or the intellect which denies it and which alone contradicts it. Otherwise all its proofs will be nothing more than *subjective* assurances, so far as the intellect is concerned. The antithesis of being – in general and as regarded by the *Logic* – is *not nothingness*, but *sensuous* and *concrete* being.

Sensuous being denies logical being; the former contradicts the latter and *vice versa*. The resolution of *this* contradiction would be the proof of the reality of logical being, the proof that it is not an abstraction, which is what the intellect now takes it to be.



The only philosophy that proceeds from no presuppositions at all is one that possesses the courage and freedom to doubt *itself*, that produces itself out of its *antithesis*. All modern philosophies, however, begin only with themselves and not with what is in opposition to them. They presuppose philosophy, that is, what they understand by philosophy to be the immediate truth. They understand by mediation only *elucidation*, as in the case of Fichte, or *development*, as in the case of Hegel. Kant was critical towards the old metaphysics, but not towards himself. Fichte proceeded from the assumption that the Kantian philosophy was the truth. All he wanted was to raise it to 'science', to link together that which in Kant had a dichotomized existence, by deriving it from a common principle. Similarly, Schelling proceeded from the assumption that the Fichtean philosophy was the established truth, and restored Spinoza in opposition to Fichte. As far as Hegel is concerned, he is a Fichte as mediated through a Schelling. Hegel polemicized against the Absolute of Schelling; he thought it lacked the moment of reflection, apprehension and negativity. In other words, he imbued the Absolute Identity with Spirit, introduced determinations into it, and fructified its womb with the semen of the Notion (the ego of Fichte). But he nevertheless took the truth of the Absolute for granted. He had no quarrel with the existence or the objective reality of Absolute Identity; he actually took for granted that Schelling's philosophy was, in its essence, a true philosophy. All he accused it of was that it lacked *form*. Hence, Hegel's relationship to Schelling is the same as that of Fichte to Kant. To both the true philosophy was already in existence, both in content and substance; both were motivated by a purely 'scientific', that is, in this case, *systematic* and *formal* interest. Both were critics of certain specific qualities of the existing philosophy, but not at all of its essence. That the Absolute existed was beyond all doubt. All it needed was to prove itself and be known *as such*. In this way it becomes a result and an object of the mediating Notion; that is, a 'scientific' truth and not merely an assurance given by intellectual intuition.

But precisely for that reason the proof of the Absolute in Hegel has, in principle and essence, only a formal significance, notwithstanding the scientific rigour with which it is carried out. Right at its starting point, the philosophy of Hegel presents us with a contradiction, the contradiction between truth and science, between essence and form, between thinking and writing. The Absolute Idea is assumed, not formally, to be sure, but essentially. What Hegel premises as stages and constituent parts of mediation he thinks are determined by the Absolute Idea. Hegel does not step outside the Idea, nor does he forget it. Rather, he already thinks the antithesis out of which the Idea should produce itself *on the basis of its having been taken for granted*. It is already proved substantially before it is proved formally. Hence, it must always remain unprovable, always

subjective for someone who recognizes in the antithesis of the Idea a premise which the Idea has itself established in advance. The externalization of the Idea is, so to speak, only a dissembling; it is only a pretence and nothing serious – the Idea is just playing a game. The conclusive proof is the beginning of the *Logic*, whose beginning is to be taken as the beginning of philosophy as such. That the starting point is being is only a formalism, for being is here not the true starting point, or the truly Primary. The starting point could just as well be the Absolute Idea because it was already a certainty, an immediate truth for Hegel before he wrote the *Logic*, i.e. before he gave a scientific form of expression to his logical ideas. The Absolute Idea – the Idea of the Absolute – is its own indubitable certainty as the Absolute Truth. It posits itself in advance as true; that which the Idea posits as the other again presupposes the Idea according to its essence. In this way, the proof remains only a formal one. To Hegel the thinker, the Absolute Idea was absolute certainty, but to Hegel the author, it was a formal uncertainty. This contradiction between the thinker who is without needs, who can anticipate that which is yet to be presented because everything is already settled for him, and the needy writer who has to go through a chain of succession and who posits and objectifies as formally uncertain what is certain to the thinker – this contradiction is the process of the Absolute Idea which presupposes being and essence, but in such a way that these on their part already presuppose the Idea. This is the only adequate reason required to explain the contradiction between the actual starting point of the *Logic* and its real starting point which lies at the end. As was already pointed out, Hegel in his heart of hearts was convinced of the certainty of the Absolute Idea. In this regard, there was nothing of the critic or the sceptic in him. However, the Absolute Idea had to demonstrate its truth, had to be released from the confines of a subjective intellectual conception – it had to be shown that it also existed for *others*. Thus understood, the question of its proof had an essential, and at the same time an inessential, meaning: it was a necessity in so far as the Absolute Idea had to prove itself, because only so could it demonstrate its necessity; but it was at the same time superfluous as far as the inner certainty of the truth of the Absolute Idea was concerned. The expression of this superfluous necessity, of this dispensable indispensability or indispensable dispensability, is the Hegelian method. That is why its end is its beginning and its beginning its end. That is why being in it is already the certainty of the Idea, and nothing other than the *Idea in its immediacy*. That is why the Idea's lack of self-knowledge in the beginning is, in the sense of the Idea, only an ironical lack of knowledge. What the Idea says is different from what it thinks. It says 'being' or 'essence', but actually it thinks only for itself. Only at the end does it also say what it thinks, but it also retracts at the end what it had expressed at the beginning, saying: 'What you had, at

the beginning and successively, taken to be a different entity, that I am myself.' The Idea itself is being and essence, but it does not yet confess to be so; it keeps this secret to itself.

That is exactly why, to repeat myself, the proof or the mediation of the Absolute Idea is only a formal affair. The Idea neither creates nor proves itself through a *real other* – that could only be the empirical and concrete perception of the intellect. Rather, it creates itself out of a formal and apparent antithesis. Being is in itself the Idea. However, to prove cannot mean anything other than to bring the other person to my own conviction. The truth lies only in the unification of 'I' and 'You'. The Other of pure thought, however, is the sensuous intellect in general. In the field of philosophy, proof therefore consists only in the fact that the contradiction between sensuous intellect and pure thought is disposed, so that thought is true not only for itself but also for its opposite. For even if every true thought is true only through itself, the fact remains that in the case of a thought that expresses an antithesis, its credibility will remain subjective, one-sided and doubtful so long as it relies only on itself. Now, logical being is in direct, unmediated and abhorrent contradiction with the being of the intellect's empirical and concrete perception. In addition, logical being is only an indulgence, a condescension on the part of the Idea, and, consequently, already that which it must prove itself to be. This means that I enter the *Logic* as well as intellectual perception only through a violent act, through a transcendent act, or through an immediate break with real perception. The Hegelian philosophy is therefore open to the same accusation as the whole of modern philosophy from Descartes and Spinoza onward – the accusation of an unmediated break with sensuous perception<sup>3</sup> and of philosophy's *immediate* taking itself for granted.

The *Phenomenology* cannot be seen as invalidating this accusation, because the *Logic* comes *after* it. Since it constitutes the antithesis of logical being it is always present to us, it is even necessarily brought forth by the antithesis and provoked by it to contradict the *Logic*, all the more so because the *Logic* is a new starting point, or a beginning from the very beginning, a circumstance which is *ab initio* offensive to the intellect. But let us grant the *Phenomenology* a positive and actual meaning in relation to the *Logic*. Does Hegel produce the Idea or thought out of the other-being of the Idea or thought? Let us look at it more closely. The first chapter deals with 'Sensuous Certainty, the this and meaning'. It designates that stage of consciousness where sensuous and particular being is regarded as true and real being, but where it also suddenly reveals itself as a general being. 'The "here" is a tree'; but I walk further and say: 'The "here" is a house.' The first truth has now disappeared. 'The "now" is night', but it is not long before 'the "now" is day'. The first alleged truth has now become 'stale'. The 'now' therefore comes out

to be a general 'now', a simple (negative) manifold. The same is the case with 'here'. 'The "here" itself does not disappear, but remains in the disappearance of the house, tree, and so on, and is indifferent to being the house, tree, etc. Therefore, this shows itself again as *mediated simplicity* or *generality*.' The particular which we mean in the context of sensuous certainty is something we cannot even express. 'Language is more truthful; here, we ourselves directly cancel our opinions, and, since it is the general which is true in sensuous certainty and which alone is expressed by language, we cannot possibly express a sensuous entity as intended.' But is this a dialectical refutation of the reality of sensuous consciousness? Is it thereby proved that the general is the real? It may well be for someone who is certain in advance that the general is the real, but not for sensuous consciousness or for those who occupy its standpoint and will have to be convinced first of the unreality of sensuous being and the reality of thought. My brother is called John, or, if you like, Adolph, but there are innumerable people besides him who are called by the same name. Does it follow from this that my brother John is not real? Or that Johnness is the truth? To sensuous consciousness, all words are names – *nomina propria*. They are quite indifferent as far as sensuous consciousness is concerned; they are all signs by which it can achieve its aims in the shortest possible way. Here, language is irrelevant. The reality of sensuous and particular being is a truth that carries the seal of our blood. The commandment that prevails in the sphere of the senses is: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Enough of words: come down to the real things! *Show* me what you are talking about! To sensuous consciousness it is precisely language that is unreal, nothing. How can it regard itself, therefore, as refuted if it is pointed out that a particular entity cannot be expressed in language? Sensuous consciousness sees precisely in this a refutation of language but not a refutation of sensuous certainty. And it is perfectly justified, too, because otherwise we would have to feed ourselves on mere words instead of on things in life. The content of the whole first chapter of the *Phenomenology* is, therefore, for sensuous consciousness nothing but the reheated cabbage of Stilpo, the Megarican – only in the opposite sense. It is nothing but a verbal game in which thought that is already certain of itself as truth plays with natural consciousness. Consciousness, however, does not let itself be confounded; it holds firmly to the reality of individual things. Why just the 'here' and not 'that which is here'? Why just the 'now' and not 'that which is now'? In this way, the 'here' and the 'now' will never become a mediated and general 'here', a mediated and general 'now' for sensuous consciousness or for us who are its advocates and wish to be convinced of something better and different. Today is now, but tomorrow is again now, and it is still completely the same unchanged and incorrigible now as it was yesterday. Here is a tree, there a house, but when there,

I again say 'here'; the 'here' always remains the old 'everywhere' and 'nowhere'. A sensuous being, a 'this', passes away, but there comes another being in its place which is equally a 'this'. To be sure, nature refutes this individual, but it soon corrects itself. It refutes the refutation in that it puts another individual in place of the previous one. Hence, to sensuous consciousness it is sensuous being that lasts and does not change.

The same unmediated contradiction, the same conflict that we encounter at the beginning of the *Logic*, now confronts us at the beginning of the *Phenomenology* – the conflict between being as the object of the *Phenomenology* and being as the object of sensuous consciousness. The 'here' of the *Phenomenology* is in no way different from another 'here' because it is actually general. But the real 'here' is distinguished from another 'here' in a real way; it is an exclusive 'here'. 'This "here" is, for example, a tree. I turn around and this truth has disappeared.' This can, of course, happen in the *Phenomenology* where turning around costs nothing but a little word. But, in reality, where I must turn my ponderous body around, the 'here' proves to be a very real thing even behind my back. The tree delimits my back and excludes me from the place it already occupies. Hegel does not refute the 'here' that forms the object of sensuous consciousness, that is, an object for us distinct from pure thought. He refutes only the logical 'here', the logical 'now'. He refutes the *idea* of 'this-being', *haecceitas*. He shows the untruth of an individual being in so far as it is determined as a (theoretical) reality in imagination. The *Phenomenology* is nothing but a phenomenological *Logic*. Only from this point of view can the chapter on sensuous certainty be excused. However, precisely because Hegel did not really immerse himself in sensuous consciousness, did not think his way into it because in his view sensuous consciousness is an object in the sense of an object of self-consciousness or thought; because self-consciousness is merely the externalization of thought *within* the self-certainty of thought; so the *Phenomenology* or the *Logic* – both have the same thing in common – begins with itself as its own immediate presupposition, and hence with an unmediated contradiction, namely, with an absolute break with sensuous consciousness. For it begins, as mentioned already, not with the 'other-being' of thought, but with the *idea of the 'other-being' of thought*. Given this, thought is naturally certain of its victory over its adversary in advance. Hence, the humour with which thought pulls the leg of sensuous consciousness. But this also goes to show that thought has not been able to refute its adversary.

Quite apart from the significance of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel started, as was already mentioned, from the assumption of Absolute Identity right from the earliest beginnings of his philosophical activity. The idea of Absolute Identity, or of the Absolute, was simply an objective truth for him. It was not just a truth for him, but absolute truth, the Absolute

Idea itself – absolute, that is, beyond all doubt and above all criticism and scepticism. But the idea of the Absolute was, according to its positive meaning, at the same time only the idea of objectivity in opposition to the idea of subjectivity, as in the Kantian and Fichtean philosophy. For that reason, we must understand the philosophy of Schelling not as ‘absolute’ philosophy – as it was to its adherents<sup>4</sup> – but as the antithesis of critical philosophy. As we know, Schelling wanted in the beginning to go in an opposite direction to idealism. His natural philosophy was actually reversed idealism at first, which means that a transition from the latter to the former was not difficult. The idealist philosopher sees life and reason in nature also, but he means by them his own life and his own reason. What he sees in nature is what he puts into it; what he gives to nature is therefore what he takes back into himself – nature is objectified ego, or spirit looking at itself as its own externalization. Idealism, therefore, already meant the unity of subject and object, spirit and nature, but together with the implication that in this unity nature had only the status of an object; that is, of something posited by spirit. The problem was, therefore, only to release nature from the bondage to which the idealist philosopher had subjected it by chaining it to his own ego, to restore it to an independent existence in order to bestow upon it the meaning it received in the philosophy of nature. The idealist said to nature, ‘You are my *alter* ego’, while he emphasized only the ego so that what he actually meant was: ‘You are an outflow, a reflected image of myself, but nothing particular just by yourself.’ The philosopher of nature said the same thing, but he emphasized the ‘alter’: ‘To be sure, nature is your ego, but your *other* ego, and hence real in itself and distinguished from you.’ That is why the meaning of the identity of spirit and nature was also a purely idealistic one in the beginning. ‘Nature is only the visible organism of our intellect’ (Schelling, in the Introduction to the *Project for a System of the Philosophy of Nature*). ‘The organism is itself only a mode of perception of the intellect’ (Schelling, in *The System of Transcendental Idealism*). ‘It is obvious that the ego constructs itself while constructing matter . . . This product – matter – is therefore completely a construction by the ego, although not for an ego that is still identical with matter’ (ibid.). ‘Nature shall be the visible spirit, and spirit, invisible nature’ (Schelling, in the Introduction to *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*). The philosophy of nature was supposed to begin only from what is objective, but at the same time to arrive at the same result at which idealism arrived through and out of itself. ‘The necessary tendency of all natural science is to arrive at the intellect from nature’ (Schelling, in *The System of Transcendental Idealism*). ‘The task of the philosophy of nature is to show the primacy of the objective and to derive the subjective from it! All philosophy must strive either to produce the intellect out of nature or nature out of the intellect’ (ibid.). That is why the philosophy of

nature, with all its integrity, left idealism undisturbed, for all it wanted was to demonstrate *a posteriori* what idealism had said of itself *a priori*. The only difference between the two lay in the course taken, in method. Nevertheless, basic to the opposite course, there was an opposite intuition, or at least it had to emerge unavoidably from this opposite course. It was bound to happen that nature thus received a meaning *for itself*. The object had already been released from the confines of subjective idealism in so far as it had also been posited as the object of a *particular* science. If not in itself, nature was nevertheless not something derivative or posited for natural science, but rather something primary and independent. In this way, nature received a meaning that was opposed to the idealism of Fichte. But even so the meaning which nature had in and for idealism – that is, one which was diametrically opposed to the meaning of nature in the philosophy of nature – was to retain its validity as if nothing had happened, and idealism was to continue to exist undiminished and with all its rights and pretensions. Consequently, we now have two independent and mutually opposed truths instead of the only absolutely decisive and autonomous truth of the Fichtean ego – the truth of idealism, which denies the truth of the philosophy of nature, and the truth of the philosophy of nature, which in its turn denies the truth of idealism. For the philosophy of nature it is nature alone that exists, just as for idealism it is only spirit. For idealism, nature is only object and accident, but for the philosophy of nature it is substance, i.e. both subject and object, something which only intelligence within the context of idealism claims to be. However, two truths, two ‘Absolutes’, are a contradiction. How do we find a way out of this conflict between a philosophy of nature that negates idealism and an idealism that negates the philosophy of nature? Only by turning the *predicate* wherein both concur into the *subject* – this would then be the Absolute or that which is purely and simply independent – and the subject into the predicate. In other words, the Absolute is nature *and* spirit. Spirit and nature are only predicates, determinations, forms of one and the same thing, namely, of the Absolute. But what then is the Absolute? Nothing other than this ‘and’, that is, the unity of spirit and nature. But are we really making any progress in taking this step? Did we not have this unity already in the notion of nature? For the philosophy of nature is a science not of an object that is opposed to the ‘I’, but of an object that is itself both subject and object – the philosophy of nature is at the same time idealism. Further, the connection between the notions of subject and object within the notion of nature was precisely the supersession of the separation – effected by idealism – between mind and non-mind, hence the supersession of the separateness of nature and spirit. What is it, therefore, through which the Absolute distinguishes itself from nature? The Absolute is the Absolute Identity, the absolute subject-object, whereas mind is the subjective subject-object.

Oh, what brilliance! And how surprising! Suddenly, we find ourselves on the standpoint of idealistic dualism: we deprive nature at the same time of that which we give it. Nature is the subject-object with the *plus* of objectivity. That means that the positive notion of nature – provided that the *plus* gives us a notion whereby nature is not suspended into the *vacuum* of the Absolute, but still remains nature – is that of *objectivity*; and similarly the notion of the spirit – in so far as it is spirit – is not a vague, nameless entity, but the notion of *subjectivity* in as much as the *plus* of subjectivity constitutes its distinguishing feature. But are we the cleverer for this approach than we were initially? Do we not have to bear again the same old cross of subjectivity and objectivity? If the Absolute is now cognized, that is, if it is brought out of the darkness of absolute indeterminateness where it is only an object of imagination and fantasy into the light of the notion, then it is cognized either as spirit or as nature. Hence, there is no science of the Absolute as such, but either the science of the Absolute as nature or that of the Absolute as spirit; that is, either the philosophy of nature or of Idealism, or if both together, then only in such a way that the philosophy of nature is only the philosophy of the Absolute as nature, while idealism is only the philosophy of the Absolute as spirit. But if the object of the philosophy of nature is the Absolute as nature, then the positive notion is just the notion of nature, which means that the predicate again becomes the subject and the subject – the Absolute – becomes a vague and meaningless predicate. Hence, I could just as well delete the Absolute from the philosophy of nature, for the Absolute applies equally to spirit as to nature; as much to one particular object as to another opposite object; as much to light as to gravity. In the notion of nature, the Absolute as pure indeterminateness, as *nihil negativum*, disappears for me, or if I am unable to banish it from my head, the consequence is that nature vanishes before the Absolute. That is also the reason why the philosophy of nature did not succeed in achieving anything more than evanescent determinations and differences which are in truth only imaginary, only ideas of distinctions but not real determinations of knowledge.

But precisely for that reason the positive significance of the philosophy of Schelling lies solely in his philosophy of nature compared to the limited idealism of Fichte, which knows only a negative relationship to nature. Therefore, one need not be surprised that the originator of the philosophy of nature presents the Absolute only from its real side, for the presentation of the Absolute from its ideal side had already occurred in Fichteanism before the philosophy of nature. Of course, the philosophy of identity restored a lost unity, but not by objectifying this unity as the Absolute, or as an entity common to and yet distinguished from nature and spirit – for thus understood, the Absolute was only a mongrel between idealism and the philosophy of nature, born out of the conflict



between idealism and the philosophy of nature as experienced by the author of the latter – but only in so far as the notion of this unity meant the notion of nature as both subject and object implying the restoration of nature to its proper place.

However, by not being satisfied with its rejection of subjective idealism – this was its positive achievement – and by wanting itself to acquire the character of absolute philosophy, which involved a misconception of its limits, the philosophy of nature came to oppose even that which was positive in idealism. Kant involved himself in a contradiction – something necessary for him but which cannot be discussed here – in so far as he misconceived the affirmative, rational limits for reason by taking them to be *boundaries*. Boundaries are arbitrary limits that are removable and ought not to be there. The philosophy of identity even rejected the positive limits of reason and philosophy together with these boundaries. The unity of thought and being it claimed to have achieved was only the unity of *thought* and *imagination*. Philosophy now became beautiful, poetic, soulful, romantic, but for that matter also transcendent, superstitious and *absolutely uncritical*. The very condition of all criticism – the distinction between ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ – thus melted into thin air. Discerning and determining thought came to be regarded as a finite and *negative* activity. No wonder then that the philosophy of identity finally succumbed, irresistibly and uncritically, to the mysticism of the Cobbler of Görlitz.

It was in the context of this philosophy that Hegel’s own philosophizing began, although Hegel was by no means a disciple bound to the originator of that philosophy. Rather, they were friends. Hegel restored philosophy by rescuing it from the realm of imagination. A Hegelian applies with perfect justification to Hegel what Aristotle remarked of Anaxagoras, namely, that he (Anaxagoras), as one among drunks, was the only sober thinker among the philosophers of nature. With Hegel the unity of thought and being acquired a rational meaning, which is not, however, above criticism. Hegel’s principle is the thinking spirit. He incorporated into philosophy the element in which rationalism has its being, namely, the intellect. In spite of the assurance to the contrary, the intellect, both as a matter of fact and with respect to its own reality, was excluded from the idea of the Absolute; in Hegel it became a moment of the Absolute itself. The metaphysical expression of this state of affairs is the statement that the negative, the other or that which is an object of reflection, is to be conceived not only as negative and finite, but also as positive and essential. There is therefore a negative and critical element in Hegel even if what really determines his thinking is the idea of the Absolute. Although he recognized that the Absolute lacked intellect or the principle of form – both are to him one and the same – and although he actually defined the Absolute differently from Schelling by attributing to it the

principle of form, thus raising form to the level of essence, the fact remains that for Hegel form – and this is indeed necessarily included in its notion – simultaneously means something formal, and the intellect again means something negative. It was assumed that the content of the philosophy of the Absolute was true, speculative and profound; all it lacked was the form of the notion. The notion – form or intellect – was posited as essential to the extent that its absence meant a defect. However, this defect must be only a formal affair if the content has been assumed as true – herein can be seen the proof of what we said earlier about the method of Hegel. This means that philosophy is not concerned with anything except notion or form. The content – even if it is to be produced internally by philosophy's self-activity inasmuch as it is contained in the form of the notion – is always given: the business of philosophy is solely to apprehend it by critically distinguishing the essential from the non-essential or from that which is contributed by the peculiar form of intuition or sensuousness. Philosophy in Hegel has therefore no genetico-critical sense, although it certainly has a critical one. A genetico-critical philosophy is one that does not dogmatically demonstrate or apprehend an object given through perception – for what Hegel says applies unconditionally to objects given immediately, i.e. those that are absolutely real and given through nature – but examines its *origin*; which questions whether an object is a real object, only an idea or just a psychological phenomenon; which, finally, distinguishes with utmost rigour between what is subjective and what is objective. The genetico-critical philosophy is mainly concerned with those things that are otherwise called secondary causes. Indeed, its relationship to absolute philosophy – which turns subjective psychological processes and speculative needs, for example, Jakob Böhme's process through which God is mediated, into the processes of the Absolute – is, to illustrate by analogy, the same as the relationship of that theological view of nature which takes comets or other strange phenomena to be the immediate workings of God to the purely physicist or natural philosophical view which sees, for example, the cause of the gallnut in the innocent sting of an insect rather than looking upon it, as theology does, as a sign of the existence of the Devil as a personal being. The Hegelian philosophy is, uniquely, a rational mysticism. Hence it fascinates in the same measure as it repels. The mystical-speculative souls, for whom it is an unbearable contradiction to see the mystical united with the rational, find it repulsive because they find the notion disappointing, and destructive of the very mystical fascination they cherish. It is equally repulsive to rational heads who find the union of the rational and the mystical abhorrent. The unity of the subjective and the objective as enunciated and placed at the summit of philosophy by Schelling, a unity that is still basic to Hegel, although placed by him – but only according to form – in the right place, namely,

at the end of philosophy as the Result. This unity is both a fruitless and a harmful principle, because it eliminates the distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' even in the case of particulars, and renders futile the genetico-critical thought, indeed, negates the very question about truth. The reason why Hegel conceived those ideas which express only subjective needs to be objective truth is that he did not go back to the source of and the need for these ideas. What he took for real reveals itself on closer examination to be of a highly dubious nature. He made what is secondary primary, thus either ignoring that which is really primary or dismissing it as something subordinate. And he demonstrated what is only particular, what is only relatively rational, to be the rational in and for itself. Thus, as a consequence of the lack of a genetico-critical mode of inquiry, we see nothingness – a conception that is extremely proximate to the idea of the Absolute – play its role right at the beginning of the *Logic*. But what is this nothingness? 'By the shadow of Aristotle!' Nothingness is that which is absolutely devoid of thought and reason.<sup>5</sup> Nothingness cannot be thought at all, because to think is to determine, as Hegel himself says. If nothingness were conceived, it would come to be determined, and hence it would no longer be nothingness. As has been rightly said, of the non-essent there is no knowledge.<sup>6</sup> We call nothingness that to which no concept corresponds (Wolf). Thought can think only that which is because thought is itself an essent, a real activity. The pagan philosophers have been criticized for not being able to overcome the eternity of matter and the world. However, to them, matter meant being; it was the sensuous expression of being. What they have been criticized for is that they *made use of thought*. But have the Christians really done away with the eternity, that is, the reality of being? All they have done is to place it into a particular being, into the being of God which they thought of as its own ground and as being without beginning. Thought can never go beyond being, because it cannot go beyond itself; because reason consists only in positing being; because only this or that being, but not the genesis of being itself, can be thought. The activity of thinking authenticates itself as a well-grounded and real activity precisely through the fact that its first and last notion is that of being without beginning. The Augustinian nothingness, which appears to be so impressive and profound to speculative thinkers precisely because there is nothing behind it, is simply an expression of *absolute arbitrariness* and *thoughtlessness*. This amounts to saying that I cannot conceive of any other ground of the world except absolute arbitrariness; that is, I cannot conceive of any other ground except no ground at all, except as just an empty act of will. But in a mere act of will reason disappears and I do not advance something which could be an object for thought, which could be called a ground; what I say is as much as nothing. Hence all I express is my own ignorance, my own arbitrariness. Nothingness is an absolute

self-deception, *proton pseudos*, the absolute lie in itself. The thought of nothingness is thought contradicting itself. He who thinks nothingness thinks precisely nothing. Nothingness is the negation of thought; it can therefore only be thought at all in so far as it is made into *something*. In the moment nothingness is thought of, it is also not thought of, for I also think the opposite of nothingness. 'Nothingness is simple sameness with itself.' Oh, really? But are simplicity and sameness then not *real* determinations? Do I really think nothingness when I think simple sameness? Do I therefore not deny nothingness the moment I posit it? 'Nothingness is complete vacuity, complete absence of determination and content, complete undifferentiatedness in itself.' What? Is nothingness undifferentiated in itself? Do I then not posit something in nothingness in exactly the same way in which nothingness in *creatio ex nihilo* is posited as quasi-matter in so far as the world is supposed to be created out of nothingness? Can I then speak of nothingness without contradicting myself? Nothingness is complete vacuity. But what is vacuity? Vacuity is where there is nothing, but at the same time where there should be or can be something. In other words, vacuity is the expression for capacity. Now this would make nothingness into an entity, and an entity whose capacity to contain is the greatest. But you say that it is absolutely without determination and content. However, I cannot think of something that lacks all determination and content, for it is impossible to have a notion of something that lacks all determination. By using the word 'lack', I give expression to the fact that something is missing, that a default is involved. This means that I think of content and determination as primary because they are positive, or, in other words, I think nothingness through something which is not nothingness. I set nothingness in relation to that which is full of content. But this also means that where I set things in relation to one another I at the same time posit determinations. Thought is a determinate, i.e. an affirmative activity to such a degree that that which is absolutely indeterminate becomes something determinate the moment it is thought; that through the very act of thought the idea of nothingness reveals itself directly as thoughtlessness, as an untrue thought, as something that just simply cannot be thought. If it were really possible to think nothingness, the distinction between reason and unreason, thought and thoughtlessness would disappear. In that case it would be possible to think and justify any and everything, even the greatest impossibility and nonsense. This also explains why the most senseless fantasies and the most preposterous miracle-mongering could flourish as long as the idea of a *creatio ex nihilo* was held to be true, for they naturally followed from the idea of nothingness which, as a sanctified authority, stood at the head of creation. Nothingness is the *limit* of reason. A follower of Kant would of course interpret this limit – as all other limits – in the sense of the limitation of reason. Nothingness,

however, is a rational limit, a limit which reason itself imposes upon itself and which is an expression of its essence and reality because nothingness is simply the absence of all reason. If it were possible for reason to think nothingness, it would in that case have taken leave of itself.

And yet 'there does exist a difference in whether something or nothing is intuited or thought. Therefore, to intuit or think nothingness does have a meaning; it is there in our intuition or thought, or rather it is vacuous thought or intuition itself'. However, vacuous thought is no thought at all. Vacuous thought is nonsense, thought only imagined, but which does not really exist. If to think nothingness should have a meaning – and a meaning it surely has, namely, that of being no thought at all – and, indeed, one such that it confers objectivity on nothingness, then knowledge of nothingness must also mean knowledge. And hence, if I were to say of an unknowing person that he knew *nothing*, I would be open to the retort that I am nevertheless attributing knowledge to him: that the person concerned *knows* nothing means that he is not unknowing. Nothingness is here a short and telling expression for want of thoroughness, competence, rationality, vagueness etc. It has the same semantic level as in the following proposition: that which contradicts itself is nothing. Nothing has only a tautological sense here. What I am saying is that the subject of the proposition is self-contradictory, self-refuting, irrational. Here 'nothing' has only a linguistic meaning. However, one could further object that 'in spite of everything, nothingness has its existence in the medium of thought and imagination. Hence the assertion that nothingness, although existing in thought and imagination, has no real existence; what it is, is found only in thought and imagination.' Admittedly, it occurs in our thought and imagination, but must it for that reason have a place in Logic? A ghost, too, can be imagined by us, but does it for that reason figure as a real being in psychology? Of course, it has a place in philosophical discussion, but only because philosophy has to enquire into the origin of the belief in ghosts. And what after all is nothingness if not a ghost haunting the speculative imagination? It is an idea that is no idea, a thought that is no thought, just as a ghost is a being that is no being, a body that is no body. And, after all, does nothingness not owe its existence to darkness, like a ghost? Is not the idea of darkness the same thing for sensuous consciousness as the idea of nothingness for abstract consciousness? Hegel himself says: 'Nothingness is here the pure absence of Being – *nihil privativum* – as darkness is the absence of light.' That is, an affinity between darkness and nothingness is conceded here, an affinity which manifests itself in the fact that the eye is just as little able to perceive darkness as the intellect is able to think nothingness. But it is precisely this unmistakable affinity between the two that leads us to the recognition of their common origin. Nothingness, as the opposite of being, is a product of the oriental imagination

which conceives of that which has no being as having being; which opposes darkness to light as if it were not just the pure absence of light but something positive in itself. Thus, darkness as an entity opposed to light has as much or as little reality as nothingness has opposed to being – indeed, there is a much less rational basis for its reality. But darkness is substantialized only where man is not yet able to make the distinction between what is subjective and what is objective; where he makes his subjective impressions and feelings into objective qualities, where the horizon of his ideational power is highly limited, where his own local standpoint appears to him as the standpoint of the world or the universe itself, and where, therefore, the disappearance of light appears to him as a real movement and darkness as the going down of the source of the light itself – i.e. the sun – and, finally, where he can, therefore, explain to himself the phenomenon of ‘darkening’ by assuming the existence of a particular being that is hostile to light and which he also believes to be involved, in the form of a dragon or a snake, in a struggle with the being of light as at the occurrence of a solar eclipse. However, the idea of darkness as a definite being that is hostile to light has its source only in the darkness of the intellect: this darkness exists only in imagination. In nature, there is no real antithesis of light. Matter in itself is not darkness, but rather that which is illuminable, or that which is unilluminated only for itself. The light, to use scholastic terms, is only the reality (*actus*) of a possibility (*potentia*) that lies in matter itself. Hence, all darkness is only relative. Even density is not antithetical to light. Quite apart from the density of transparent diamonds and crystals, there are bodies that, even when made dense – oil-besmeared paper, for example – become transparent. Even the densest and the darkest bodies become transparent if cut into thin laminae. Of course, there does not exist an absolutely transparent body, but this rests – not considering the accompanying empirical circumstances – on the ‘itselfness’ of a body and is just as natural as the fact that one and the same thought becomes changed in the minds of the different people who take it up. This change rests on their independence and self-activity. However, this self-activity does not, for that matter, express an opposition to the activity of the being who is communicating and revealing his thoughts. It is the same thing with the idea of nothingness as with the Zoroastrian conception of night. Nothingness is only the limit imposed upon human thought; it does not emanate from thought, but rather from non-thought. Nothingness is just nothing; that is all that can be said of it. Hence nothingness constitutes its own refutation. Fantasy alone is responsible for making a substance out of nothingness, but only by way of metamorphosing nothingness into a ghost-like, being-less being. It can, therefore, be said that Hegel did not enquire into the genesis of nothingness, thus accepting it at its face value. In view of the analysis of the meaning of nothingness just given, the

opposition between being and nothingness as such is by no means – let it be said in passing – a universal and metaphysical opposition.<sup>7</sup> Rather it falls into a definite area – the relationship of individual to general being – of the imagining and reflecting individual to the species. The species is *indifferent* to the individual. The reflecting individual carries the consciousness of the species within himself, which means that he can transcend his ‘now-being’, regard it as of no consequence, and anticipate by imagination a ‘not-being’ in opposition to his ‘now-being’ – ‘not-being’ has meaning only as an imagined opposite of ‘now-being’. A man can say to himself: ‘What am I worth? What meaning is there in life? What in death? Who is going to bother whether I exist or not? And, once I am dead, I am without pain and consciousness anyway.’ Not-being is here taken, and given independent existence, as a state of pure apathy and non-sentience. The unity of being and nothingness has its positive meaning only as the *indifference* of the species or of the consciousness of the species towards the particular individual. However, the opposition itself between being and nothingness exists only in the imagination, for being, of course, exists in reality – or rather it is the real itself – but nothingness, not-being, exists only in imagination and reflection.

However, just as it is with nothingness in the *Logic*, so it also is with other matters in the philosophy of Hegel. Hegel disregarded – and not accidentally, but rather as a consequence of the spirit of German speculative philosophy since Kant and Fichte – the secondary causes (which are, however, very often the primary causes and are truly grasped only when they are grasped not only empirically, but also metaphysically, i.e. philosophically) together with the *natural* grounds and causes of things which form the fundamental principles of the genetical-critical philosophy. From the extremes of a hypercritical subjectivism, we are, in Hegel’s philosophy, hurled into the extremes of an uncritical objectivism. Of course, the natural and psychological ways of explaining things in the early days of philosophy were superficial, but only because one did not see logic in psychology, metaphysics in physics and reason in nature. If, on the other hand, nature is understood as it should be understood – as objective reason – then it is the only canon equally as true of philosophy as of art. The *summum bonum* of art is human form (taken not only in the narrowest sense, but also in the sense of poetry); the *summum bonum* of philosophy is human *being*. Human form cannot be regarded as limited and finite, because even if it were so the artistic-creative spirit could easily remove the limits and conjure up a higher form from it. The human form is rather the genus of the manifold animal species; it no longer exists as species in man, but as genus. The being of man is no longer a particular and subjective, but a universal being, for man has the whole universe as the object of his drive for knowledge. And only a cosmopolitan being can have the cosmos as its object. It is true that the stars are

not the objects of an immediate sensuous perception, but they obey the same laws as we do. All speculation that would rather go beyond nature and man is therefore futile – as futile as the kind of art that would like to give us something higher than human form, but gives us only distortions. Futile, too, is the speculative philosophy that has risen against Hegel and is in vogue now – the speculative philosophy of the positivists. For instead of going beyond Hegel, it has actually retrogressed far behind Hegel in so far as it has failed to grasp precisely the most significant directions suggested by Hegel and his predecessors, Kant and Fichte, in their own characteristic ways. Philosophy is the science of reality in its truth and totality. However, the all-inclusive and all-encompassing reality is nature (taken in the most universal sense of the word). The deepest secrets are to be found in the simplest natural things, but, pining away for the Beyond, the speculative fantast treads them under his feet. The only source of salvation lies in a return to nature. It is wrong to look upon nature as contradicting ethical freedom. Nature has built not only the mean workshop of the stomach, but also the temple of the brain. It has not only given us a tongue whose papillae correspond to intestinal villi, but also ears that are enchanted by the harmony of sounds and eyes that only the heavenly and generous being of light ravishes. Nature opposes only fantastic, not rational, freedom. Each glass of wine that we drink one too many of is a very pathetic and even peripatetic proof that the servilism of passions enrages the blood; a proof that the Greek *sophrosyne* is completely in conformity with nature. As we know, the maxim of Stoics – and I mean the rigorous Stoics, those scarecrows of the Christian moralists – was: live in conformity with nature.

## Notes

1 Hence the so-called forms of logical judgments and conclusions are not active forms of thought, not causal relations of reason. They presuppose the metaphysical concepts of generality, particularity, individuality, of the whole and the part, of necessity, of cause and effect. They are thought of only through these concepts; hence, as forms of thought, they are posited, derived, and not original. Only metaphysical relationships are logical; only metaphysics, as the science of categories, is the true, *esoteric* logic. This is the profound insight of Hegel. The so-called logical forms are only abstract and elementary forms of language; but speech is not thought, for otherwise the greatest chatterer would be the greatest thinker. What we normally call thought is only the translation into an idiom comprehensible to us of a highly gifted but more or less unknown author who is difficult to understand. The so-called logical forms have their validity only in this translation, not in the original. Hence, they belong not to the 'optics', but only to the 'dioptric' [belonging to the use of optical instruments. Tr.] of the spirit, a domain which is, of course, still unknown.

2 What the term 'presentation' connotes here is the same as 'positing' in



Hegel's philosophy. For example, the concept is already a judgment, but not yet posited as such; similarly, the judgment is in itself a conclusion, but not posited, not realized, as such. That which precedes presupposes that which succeeds, but the former must nevertheless emerge as itself and for itself, so that the latter, which in reality is prior, may again be posited for itself. As a consequence of this method, Hegel also gives independent status to determinations that have no reality in themselves. This is what happens in the case of being at the beginning of the *Logic*. What other meaning can being have except that of real, actual being? What therefore is the concept of being supposed to be as distinct from the concept of existence and reality? The same holds true for the forms of judgments and syllogisms, which, as special logical relationships, are given an independent character by Hegel. Thus the affirmative and negative judgments are meant to express a particular relationship, namely that of immediacy, whereas singular, particular and universal judgments are meant to express the relationship of reflexion. But all these different forms of judgments are only empirical modes of speech that have to be reduced to a judgment wherein the predicate contains the essential difference, the nature, the species of the subject before they can express a logical relationship. The same holds true for the assertive and problematic judgment. In order that the judgment inherent in the concept may be posited, these forms must also be posited as particular stages, and the assertive judgment must again be an immediate judgment. But what kind of logical relationship must lie at the base of these forms of judgments? Does this not lie at the base of the subject that makes judgments?

3 There is, of course, an unavoidable break which lies in the nature of science as such; however, there is no necessity for it to be an unmediated break. It is mediated by philosophy by the fact that it produces itself out of non-philosophy.

4 The Hegelian philosophy, too, can be correctly known, appreciated and judged only if one realizes that, notwithstanding the fact that it has formally incorporated Fichteanism into itself, it constitutes the antithesis of Kantianism and Fichteanism in its content.

5 Hegel designates nothingness as privative of thought. 'Already at the level of existence thought-less nothingness becomes a limiting factor.' *Logic*, Vol. III, p. 94.

6 See also Aristotle's *Analytica Posteriora*, Bk II, c. 7, §2, and Bk I, §10.

7 In Greek philosophy, the opposition between being and not-being is obviously an abstract expression of the opposition between affirmation and negation, between reality and unreality in the sense of truth and untruth. At least in Plato's *Sophist* this opposition has obviously no other meaning than the opposition between truth and untruth. Hence, the central concept, around which the whole dialogue revolves, is the concept of difference; for where there is no difference, there is also no truth; where everything can be true without distinction, as with the sophists, nothing is true.

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**Extract from *The Trumpet of the Last Judgment over  
Hegel the Atheist and Antichrist: An Ultimatum*  
(1841)**

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Bruno Bauer

**Introduction**

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.  
(Obadiah 1.4)<sup>1</sup>

So saith the Lord! So has He spoken, so will He speak, and so speaks He to all who will not recognize His Majesty, to those who would raise themselves up and not mark that they are but men. So He speaketh and so pulls He down from their imagined heights those who would be like unto Him, those who say – in their hearts or in their books – it is not He, He does not exist, but only we who are Lords and Masters of all, only Man is God, I am the Lord, the Almighty, the Omnipotent and Only Great One. So saith the Lord: ‘I will bring thee down.’

The hour has now struck in which the last, the worst and the proudest enemy of the Lord will be brought to earth. This last enemy is also the most dangerous, for these ‘Wild Men’ – these people of the Antichrist – have dared to declare the non-existence of the Eternal Lord, and this in the full light of day, in the market, before all Christian Europe, in the light of the sun which has never shone upon such wickedness. They have practised an idolatrous adultery with the Whore of Reason while they have murdered the Anointed of God. But Europe, once filled with Holy Zeal, strangled the Whore, and then bound itself into a Holy Alliance so as to cast the Antichrist into chains and once again to set up the eternal altars of the True Lord.

But then came – No! – but then was scented, nursed, protected, sheltered, indeed honoured and paid, a man who was stronger than the French, that enemy from without which had been conquered, and he gave new foundation to the principles of Hell, and raised them into the

power of a law. Hegel was called forth and fixed at the centre of the University of Berlin! He had, with the attractive power of Philosophy over German youth, secured his introduction. This man – if we are still allowed to give him human title – filled with hate against everything Godly and Consecrated – now turned perversely under the shield of philosophy to attack everything which men should hold as exalted and honourable. A mob of disciples closed about him, and never – in the whole of history, never – had anyone such obedience, dependency, such blind trust given to him as he was given by his disciples and hangers-on. Wherever he led, they followed him, and they followed him in the war against the One.

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that  
I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.  
(Jeremiah 9.1)

Oh, how many has he slaughtered! He has cut down the power and bloom of our youth and has robbed us of the last strength of our cause. And even now, his work reaches out from his grave, and it even seems that in his death his power yet grows. In the beginning, he and his school, seemed innocent, particularly when we compare its workings with the monstrously matured mob of disciples and their doings today, their leveling of everything high and valuable, and their efforts to set self-consciousness – as they call it – on the throne of the All-Highest.<sup>2</sup> The government wishes but to protect Christianity, Love, Trust, Patience and Holy Faith against this danger, the danger of that hideous mob freeing the bonds of dishonourable reason, and once again set up the Abomination of Desolation within the Holy Kingdom. Church and state would be shaken to the core by such a hellish discharge.

One cannot believe that this mob, which the Christian state in our times is compelled to struggle against, is fixed upon any other principle or other teaching than that set out by the Master of Deceit. It is certainly true that the younger school of Hegelians is quite different from that first which gathered itself about its master, for this younger school have openly cast away all godliness and modesty, and struggle openly against Church and state. They have inverted the cross and threaten to upset the throne itself – such opinions and hellish deeds of which the old school might appear incapable. But if the older school did not rise up to these things, to this devilish energy, it was only the result of chance circumstances, for fundamentally and in principle, if we go back to the actual teaching of the master, the latest disciples have added nothing new – they have only torn away the thin veil which briefly concealed the thought of the master and have revealed – shamelessly enough! – the system in its nakedness.<sup>3</sup> It was only the cunning of the old serpent, the same which

brought our forebears to the Fall, which by devilish fabrication gave that thought the appearance of Christianity, Churchliness and piety. The early followers were deceived by this appearance: it so enticed them that they were soon fixed upon the deadly web of the system and then infected by the insidious poison of principles. This philosophic acid entered ever more deeply into them until all was corroded, sense, heart, soul, thought and conscience. Words and ambition soured, and the appearance of sweetness and heavenly mildness fell away! Everything is acid!

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

(Romans 3.14)

Ha! Here is the sword of the Lord and Gideon! We now smite you so that that mask which has led so many to a fall will itself fall, and to let all know, for their good, what is the true shape of this worldly wisdom.

Away with the mask! No one should deceive themselves! The day of judgment is coming in which that which is now concealed will be revealed. Have courage! Arm yourself strongly, so that you will be able to bear the sight of the Concealed One and view the mystery of its iniquity. It is the mystery of the Serpent.

We can proceed directly to the centre point of this philosophy, its destruction of religion – for we affirm that this is the core which, after the husk has been removed, is that from which every consequence of this system can be brought into the light.

Oh! those poor and miserable creatures who let themselves be deceived when it was whispered to them that ‘The Object of religion as of philosophy is the Eternal Truth in its Objectivity Itself, God and nothing but God and the explication of God’ (*Phil. of Relig.* 1, 21 – we cite from the second, ‘improved’ edition). Oh, those poor souls who were pleased to hear that ‘Religion and philosophy coincide’ (*ibid.*), and who still thought to have their God when they heard, and accepted, the statement that religion was ‘the self-consciousness of the Absolute Spirit’ (*ibid.*, 1, 200) – namely, that self-consciousness in which the Divine Spirit itself in its holiness and belief is present and knows itself to be in God and from God, and is to be honoured as such. The poor souls! They have not rightly heard or rightly seen, nor have they recalled the saying ‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear’ (Mark 4.9, 12). They have eyes yet do not see, hear and do not understand.

Hegel, for himself and his disciples, has cast aside and destroyed religion. In itself it is inaccessible to his fiery darts, and the True Believers are protected by ‘the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked’ (*Ephesians* 6.16) – but he has prepared for the destruction of religion. He has drawn a double cover over his

work of destruction, which only the critical knife of belief can cut away. We will now proceed.

Very often, countless times, on almost every page of his work on the philosophy of religion, Hegel speaks about God, and it always appears that he understands the term 'God' to mean that living God who was before the world was, and to whom alone reality belongs, who 'the One True Reality is' (*Phil. of Relig.* 1, 92), he who existed as the 'Trinity' before the creation of the world and who revealed his love to man in Christ.

The older Hegelians (Göschel at their head),<sup>4</sup> moved by Christian piety, stayed at this viewpoint, and so were hindered from going on to the more dangerous points of the dialectic in which it would be killed. Now we certainly recognize the residual piety of the older Hegelians, as it is proper to do so, but we would only make ourselves ridiculous if we took this first superficial appearance of piety as a matter of particular significance, as it will vanish of itself when the second hull, which covers the kernel of the system, is drawn away. This first appearance of piety will be denied by the negative dialectic of the central principle of Hegelianism itself, and even if piety is wanted in itself, or the appearance of it, it will in principle be entirely excluded.

Strauss and some of the more clever of the older disciples have dressed themselves up in large measure with this piety, so that only here and there is the kernel of the system glimpsed through the two hulls. The second appearance is given when religion is to be taken as a dialectical *substance-relationship*, in which the individual spirit is related to the universal, which has power over it as substance, or – as it is still said – *Absolute Idea*. The individual spirit will abandon its particular uniqueness and set itself in unity with the *Absolute Idea*.

This second appearance is a dangerous appearance, and many powerful intellects have been captured by it. It is the appearance of *Pantheism*. But more dangerous than this appearance is the thing itself, which is immediately present to every open and expert eye when it but exerts itself to a certain extent: this is presented as the understanding of religion as being nothing more than an inward relationship of self-consciousness to itself, and that all powers which exist as substance or *Absolute Idea* are but appearance differentiated from self-consciousness, merely religious images objectified out of self-consciousness.

This is the terrible, dreadful, religiously mortifying kernel of the system. Who partakes of this kernel is dead to God, for he holds God dead. Who eats of this kernel is deeper fallen than Eve, for she ate of the apple and Adam was seduced by her, and Adam hoped to be as God. But the disciple of this system, with sinful pride, has no wish to be as God, but only to be Ego = Ego, to be the blasphemous infinity, to win and to enjoy but the freedom and self-pleasure of self-consciousness.

This philosophy wants no God, or Gods as the heathen: it wants but man and his self-conscious and everything set towards its vain self-consciousness.

As a warning to all right-minded, we will now present how the appearance of religion as a substance-relationship is dissolved by Hegel himself to leave but a residue of infinite self-consciousness.

#### Chapter IV Hatred of the established order

Pride is the only feeling which Hegel can instil into his disciples. That meekness and humility which alone can give honour to the Lord and modesty to man is foreign to him.

The first thing to which he calls forth his disciples is a profane travesty of the *sursum corda*: 'Man cannot think highly enough of the greatness and power of his mind' (*GP* I, 6; *H* I, xiii).<sup>5</sup> But one must be a philosopher to think in such an unlimited manner concerning oneself. To Hegel, all men other than philosophers are oxen, and the philosopher among those who have knowledge are in opposition to the oxen: 'It was a celebration, a festival of knowledge – *at the cost of the oxen*' (*GP* I, 279; *H* I, 238). The ordinary folk, the decent citizens, are said to lie once and for all 'in the ditch' – in the trench of finiteness (*GP* I, 196; *H* I, 172). Hegel speaks, with inward satisfaction, of the boundless contempt which Heraclitus had against the people, and for this calls him a 'noble character' (*GP* I, 329; *H* I, 279). He lacks all love for the common and honest man.

Philosophy is, for him, the '*Temple of self-conscious reason*', a temple which is quite other than the temple of the 'Jews' in which the Living God resides (*GP* I, 49; *H* I, 35). The philosophers are the architects of this temple, in which the cult of self-consciousness is celebrated, that unity of God, Priest and Community. Philosophers are the Lords of this World, and create the destiny of mankind, and their acts are the acts of destiny. They 'write the executive orders of World History as originally received', and people must obey them, and the King, by acting in accord with these directives, is but a secretary *copying* the directives written originally by philosophers. What pride! What a basis for revolution if a royal decree would not have the good fortune to please the philosophers. The philosophers are always 'obligated to begin' if an 'advance' in history is to occur. They direct the whole, and have always the whole in sight, while 'others have their *particular* interests – this dominion, these riches, this girl' (*GP* III, 96; *H* II, 453).

But not only when an advance is to occur do philosophers have hands in the affair, but whenever the established order is to be disturbed, and here the positive forms, the institutions, the constitution and religious statues are to collapse and fall. The philosophers are truly of a singular

danger, for they are the most consistent and unrestrained<sup>6</sup> revolutionaries. 'Philosophy begins with the decline of the actual world.' That has a somewhat ambiguous ring about it, and might in any case be yet so understood that Philosophy requires the actual world to be put into confusion for it to exist. The same ambiguity is yet also present when it is said

that Philosophy first commences when . . . a gulf has arisen *between inward strivings and external reality*, and the old forms of Religion, etc., are no longer satisfying; when Mind manifests indifference to its living existence or rests unsatisfied therein, and moral life becomes dissolved. Then it is that Mind takes refuge in the clear space of thought to create for itself a kingdom of thought in *opposition* to the actual world.

(GP I, 66; H I, 52)

But then Hegel goes on to say that the Mind

*lays hold of and troubles* this real, substantial kind of existence, this morality and faith, and thus the period of destruction commences.

(GP I, 66; H I, 51–2).

Furthermore,

The definite character of the standpoint of *thought* is the *same* character which permeates all the other historical sides of the spirit of the people, which is most intimately related to them, and which constitutes their *foundation*.

(GP I, 68; H I, 53)

Now then, is it not evident that Philosophy insidiously removes the foundations of real life, of the state, of the religious community whenever it withdraws the soul, pure and simple, which infuses all forms of life? Whenever the Idea is seized and raised to self-consciousness, and so develops 'as the thought and knowledge of that which is the substantial spirit of its time'?

Now once Hegel has placed knowledge and theory so infinitely high, so must he then assert that Philosophy, as the knowledge of the substantial, 'in form stands *above its time*' (GP I, 69; H 54).

The mob of Young Hegelians would like to convince us that Hegel has sunk himself within the folds of theory, and has not thought to lead this *theory to praxis*. As though Hegel had not attacked religion with a hellish rage, as if he had not set forth upon the destruction of the established world. But his *theory* is *praxis*, and for that very reason most dangerous,

far-reaching and destructive. It is the revolution itself. Why then are these dissolute disciples acting so foolishly concerning their Master? It cannot be believed that they have not recognized the destructive rage of this system, for they have taken their principle only from their Master. It is possible that they so act – even to reviling Hegel himself – so as to insure that these extensive and most dangerous writings are quietly left to circulate undisturbed in all hands, so that the government would not finally detect their criminality and so forbid these writings, teachings and preachings. The devil is clever! He certainly is! But these tactics can no longer help him! It must be openly and publicly declared: Hegel was a greater revolutionary than the total of all his disciples. The axe must be laid to him: he must be uprooted!

Of that wisdom which has been set over time and place,<sup>7</sup> Hegel says, 'it is what a new form of development has brought forth. Philosophy is the inner birthplace of the Spirit, which will later step forth into real form' (*GP* I, 70; cf. *H* I, 55). This then is the crucial point to which Philosophy has led: that every knowledge not only develops a new form, but a new content as well. At one time substance, self-affirming, lay at the foundation of reality, directly dominating it, and expressing itself in outward laws. Hence, the mind was not radically free. But now, knowledge has been freed, and the mind and its related determinations have taken upon a new form – the form of freedom and self-consciousness. And so, Philosophy becomes the critic of the established order: 'Through knowledge the spirit posits a difference between what is *known* and that which *is*' (ibid.). 'Through knowledge, Mind makes manifest a distinction between *knowledge* and that which *is*' (ibid.). That which is and that which should be are now distinguished. However, only the *should* is true and justified, and must be brought to authority, domination and power. It must pass through to 'its opposite': 'Whenever a principle is set forth which is determined upon giving birth to a new and higher actuality, so it appears in a direct and even hostile and destructive relation to reality, and not merely as opinion and doctrine' (cf. *GP* II, 118; *H* I, 445). And so, a theoretical principle must not merely play a supportive role, but must come to the act, to practical opposition, to turn itself directly into praxis and action. 'This practical relationship lies even in the principle: that it contains this is its true status' (ibid.). Hence it is not enough that the incitement to general revolt and 'excitation is the highest service and highest activity of a teacher', but the opposition must be serious, sharp, thoroughgoing, unrestrained, and must see its highest goal in the overthrow of the established order.

And so philosophy must be active in politics, and whenever the established order contradicts the self-consciousness of philosophy, it must be directly attacked and shaken. Servitude, tutelage, is unbearable to the free spirit:



To sleep, to live, to have a certain office, is not our real Being, and certainly to be no slave is such.

(GP I, 118; H I, 100).

Every nation in course of time makes such alterations in its existing constitution as will bring it nearer to the true constitution. The nation's mind itself shakes off its leading-strings (its childhood shoes), and the constitution expresses the consciousness of what it is in itself – the form of truth, of self-knowledge. If a nation can no longer accept as implicitly true what its constitution expresses to it as the truth, if its consciousness or Notion and its actuality are not at one, then the nation's mind is torn asunder.

(GP II, 276; H II, 97)

A government must, however, recognize that the time for this has come; should it, on the contrary, knowing not the truth, cling to temporary institutions, taking what – though recognized – is unessential, to be a bulwark guarding it from the essential (and the essential is what is contained in the Ideal), that government will fall, along with its institutions, before the force of the mind.

(GP II, 277; H II, 98)

[Bauer continues this with a sentence not found in the passage he cites] It lies in the Idea of a constitution that a temporal institution, which has lost its truth, and is as *impudent* as to want itself to continue, must be dissolved.

And who should it be who is to declare when a temporal institution, a regulation, is no longer to be allowed validity? To whom is it given to pass final judgment upon the 'impudence' of the established and positive order? Who is to give the signal for the ruin of the actual state of affairs? Now, you know that well enough yourself! Only the philosopher! 'This insight (into the emptiness of the given state) can be reached through Philosophy alone' (ibid.).

Hear! Hear this self-recognition of the philosopher! Have the Young Hegelians proclaimed anything more criminal or more treasonable? As yet they have not gone so far – as shameless as they are, as insolent, yet they have not spoken out. It is time that we, the elders, fasten our eyes once again upon their father and turn ourselves against him!

Hegel not only is set against the state, the Church and religion, but opposes everything firm and established, for – as he asserts – the philo-

sophical principle has in recent times become general, all-encompassing and without limit.

In this new period the universal principle . . . the independently existent thought, this culminating point of inwardness, is now set forth and firmly grasped as such, the dead externality of authority is set aside and regarded as out of place.

(*GP* III, 328; *H* III, 217)

Indeed, we can no longer be amazed when Hegel envisions the French Revolution, this work of an atheistic Philosophy, to be the greatest event in history, when he envisions it as the salvation of Mankind, and considers it to be the deed in which the calling of Philosophy to world-domination has been perfectly proven. He says:

The conception, the idea of Right asserted its authority *all at once*, and the old framework of injustice could offer no resistance to its onslaught. A constitution, therefore, was established in harmony with the conception of Right, and on this foundation all future legislation was to be based. Never since the sun had stood in the firmament and the planets revolved around him had it been perceived that man's existence centres in his head, i.e., in Thought, inspired by which he builds up the world of reality. Anaxagoras had been the first to say that *voûs* governs the world; but not until now had man advanced to the recognition of the principle that Thought ought to govern spiritual reality. This was accordingly a glorious mental dawn. All thinking beings shared in the jubilation of this epoch. Emotions of a lofty character stirred men's minds at that time; a spiritual enthusiasm thrilled through the world, as if the reconciliation between the Divine and the Secular was now first accomplished.<sup>8</sup>

Again, Hegel's atheism reveals itself even more clearly and displays itself in its full nakedness,<sup>9</sup> when we observe how this Antichrist extols the French – since they have made an insurrection against God – and scorns the Germans, since even in the time of Godlessness, in the time of the *Aufklärung*, they lacked the brashness to deny God, and could not totally set aside God and religion. The French are to him the true men, the Germans but beasts of burden; the former are spirited people, the latter but lazy drones; the former true philosophers, the latter but mere complainers; the former are the discoverers of the true Kingdom of the Spirit, the latter but weaklings who first ask their guardians and beg permission from their bureaucrats so that they might be allowed to enjoy the fruits of knowledge; the former are the heroes of freedom, the latter but slaves,

who tremble should they become free. In sum, the French are everything for him, the Germans less than nothing.<sup>10</sup>

## Notes

1 Bauer's citations from both the Scriptures and Hegel will be retained in the text. Translator's notes will be footnoted. (Tr.)

2 This is Bauer's viewpoint, for as he later notes in the *Trumpet*, 'God is dead for philosophy and only the self as self-consciousness lives, creates, acts and is everything.' See also Rosen, *Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx* (Boston, 1977), 85ff. (Tr.)

3 This theme of 'exposure' is a dominant one throughout Young Hegelianism, particularly with Marx and Bauer. See Stanley E. Hyman's *The Tangled Bank: Darwin, Marx, Frazer and Freud as Imaginative Writers* (New York, 1962). (Tr.)

4 Karl Friedrich Göschel (1784–1861). Hegel's very favourable review of Göschel's 1829 work *Aphorismen über Nichtwissen und absolutes Wissen* insured that Göschel would be considered among the orthodox followers of Hegel. (Tr.)

5 Bauer's footnoting is to Michelet's 1840 edition of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, which appeared in volumes 17–19 of the collected works (hereafter referred to as *GP*). It is evident that Bauer was using a variant text, for although most of his citations can be located in *GP*, some cannot. However, in no instance does Bauer's citation run counter to the general context. For the convenience of the English reader, references in the *GP* have been correlated with the translated material found in the three-volume E. S. Haldane translation, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (London, 1955). Haldane's translation is not, in all cases, in as direct accord with the original text as might be desired, and has, in some unimportant instances, been altered by the present translator. The Haldane translation is referred to as *H* in the footnoting citation. (Tr.)

6 The German term here is *rücksichtslos*. It is used frequently by both Bauer and Marx, for example, in Marx's letter to Ruge found in this collection. (Tr.)

7 Hegel is discussing the emergence of Christianity. (Tr.)

8 Refers to Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, p. 441; for an English translation see *Hegel's Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree (New York, 1956), p. 447. (Tr.)

9 Again the 'exposure' theme. (Tr.)

10 A particularly damning charge. As Treitschke, the historian of the period, observed, a 'war fever' directed against the French gripped all of Germany in 1840, a fever first occasioned by Prussia's support of English Mediterranean interest against the French. The wide appeal of such vehemently patriotic poetry as Becker's 1840 *Sie sollen ihn nicht haben*, or Schneckenburger's *Die Wacht am Rhein*, which appeared in the same year, was a sign of the popular resentment over stubborn French territorial claims in the Rhineland. (Tr.)

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## Extract from *Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State* (1843)

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Karl Marx

Hegel's starting point is the *separation* of the 'state' from 'civil society', of 'particular interests' from 'the absolutely universal interest of the state proper', and it is perfectly true that the bureaucracy is based *on this separation*. Hegel proceeds from the presupposition of the 'corporations', and it is perfectly true that the bureaucracy does presuppose the corporations or at any rate 'the corporation mind'. Hegel does not expound the *content* of the bureaucracy, but only a number of general characteristics of its '*formal*' organization; and it is perfectly true that the bureaucracy is only a 'formal system' for a content lying outside it.

The *corporations* are the materialism of the bureaucracy, and the bureaucracy is the *spiritualism* of the corporations. The corporation is the bureaucracy of civil society; the bureaucracy is the corporation of the state. Hence, in reality, the bureaucracy is counterpoised as the 'civil society of the state' to 'the corporations, the state of civil society'. Wherever the 'bureaucracy' emerges as a new principle, wherever the universal interest of the state begins to develop into a 'separate', and therefore a 'real', interest, it comes into conflict with the corporations, just as every result comes into conflict with the existence of its own presuppositions. However, no sooner does the real state come into being and civil society, spurred by its own impulse to rationality, emancipates itself from the corporations, than the bureaucracy attempts to restore them; for the fall of 'the state of civil society' entails the fall of 'the civil society of the state'. With the disappearance of the spiritualism, the materialism confronting it must likewise disappear. The result fights for the existence of its presuppositions as soon as a new principle attacks not just the *existence* but the *principle* of that existence. The same mentality which in society creates the corporation, in the state creates the bureaucracy. An attack on the corporation mind entails an attack on the bureaucratic mind also, and if the latter had previously attacked the corporations to create space for

itself, it now attempts to ensure the survival of the corporations by force in order to preserve the corporation mind and thereby its own mind.

The 'bureaucracy' is the '*state formalism*' of civil society. It is the 'state-consciousness', the 'state will', the 'state power' in the form of a corporation, i.e. of a *particular, self-contained* society within the state. (The 'universal interest' can only maintain itself as a 'particular' opposed to other particulars as long as the particular maintains itself as a 'universal' opposed to universals. The bureaucracy must therefore protect the *imaginary* universality of particular interests, i.e. the corporation mind, in order to protect the *imaginary* particularity of the universal interest, i.e. its own mind. The state must be a corporation as long as the corporation wishes to be a state.) However, the bureaucracy wants the corporation as an *imaginary* power. It is true that the individual corporation wants to maintain its own *particular* interest against the bureaucracy, but it also *needs* the bureaucracy against other corporations, against other particular interests. Hence, as the *perfect corporation*, the bureaucracy triumphs over the *corporation* as the imperfect bureaucracy. It therefore disparages the corporation as an appearance, or wishes to do so, but at the same time it requires this appearance to exist and to believe in its own existence. The corporation represents the attempt by civil society to become the state; but the bureaucracy is the state which has really made itself into civil society.

The 'state formalism' of the bureaucracy is the 'state as formalism', and this is how Hegel represents it. As this 'state formalism' constitutes itself as a real power and thus becomes its own material content, it follows inevitably that the 'bureaucracy' is a network of *practical* illusions or the 'illusion of the state'. The bureaucratic mind is a Jesuitic, theological mind through and through. The bureaucrats are the Jesuits and theologians of the state. The bureaucracy is the religious republic.

Since the 'state as formalism' is the *essence* of bureaucracy, it must also be its *purpose*. Accordingly, the real purpose of the state appears to the bureaucracy as a purpose *opposed* to the state. The mind of the bureaucracy is the 'formal mind of the state'. It therefore makes the 'formal mind of the state' or the *real* mindlessness of the state into a categorical imperative. The bureaucracy appears to itself as the ultimate purpose of the state. As the bureaucracy converts its 'formal' purposes into its content, it comes into conflict with 'real' purposes at every point. It is therefore compelled to pass off form as content and content as form. The purposes of the state are transformed into purposes of offices and *vice versa*. The bureaucracy is a magic circle from which no one can escape. Its hierarchy is a hierarchy of knowledge. The apex entrusts insight into particulars to the lower echelons while the lower echelons credit the apex with insight into the universal, and so each deceives the other.

The bureaucracy is the imaginary state alongside the real state; it is the spiritualism of the state. Hence everything acquires a double meaning: a real meaning and a bureaucratic one; in like fashion, there is both real knowledge and bureaucratic knowledge (and the same applies to the will). Whatever is real is treated bureaucratically, in accordance with its transcendental, spiritual essence. The bureaucracy holds the state, the spiritual essence of society, in thrall, as its *private property*. The universal spirit of bureaucracy is *secrecy*; it is mystery preserved within itself by means of the hierarchical structure and appearing to the outside world as a self-contained corporation. Openly avowed political spirit, even patriotic sentiment, appears to the bureaucracy as a *betrayal* of its mystery. The principle of its knowledge is therefore *authority*, and its *patriotism* is the adulation of authority. Within itself, however, *spiritualism* degenerates into *crass materialism*, the materialism of passive obedience, the worship of authority, the *mechanism* of fixed, formal action, of rigid principles, views and traditions. As for the individual bureaucrat, the purpose of the state becomes his private purpose, *a hunt for promotion, careerism*. On the one hand, he regards real life as something *material* because *the spirit of that life leads its own independent existence* in the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy must therefore strive to make life as material as possible. On the other hand, real life is material for him in so far as it becomes an object of bureaucratic treatment, because his mind is prescribed for him, his purpose lies outside himself, his existence is the existence of his office. The state thus exists only as a series of fixed bureaucratic minds held together by passive obedience and their subordinate position in a hierarchy. *Real* knowledge appears lacking in content, just as real life appears dead, for this imaginary knowledge and imaginary life pass for the substance. Whether consciously or unconsciously the bureaucrat must behave Jesuitically towards the real state. Inevitably, however, as soon as he finds himself opposed by knowledge, he must likewise become self-conscious and his Jesuitism must become deliberate.

While in one respect the bureaucracy is a crass materialism, in another respect its crass spiritualism is revealed in its wish *to do everything*. That is to say, it makes *will* the prime cause because it is nothing but active existence and receives its content from outside itself, and can therefore only prove its own existence by moulding and limiting that content. For the bureaucrat the world is no more than an object on which he acts.

When Hegel describes the executive power as the *objective* aspect of the sovereignty residing in the monarch, he is right in the same way that it was right to say that the Catholic Church represented the *actual existence* of the sovereignty, the content and the spirit of the Holy Trinity. In the bureaucracy the identity posited between the interest of the state and particular private purposes is such that the *interest of the state*

becomes a *particular* private purpose opposed to the other private purposes.

The bureaucracy can be superseded [*aufgehoben*] only if the universal interest becomes a particular interest *in reality* and not merely in thought, in *abstraction*, as it does in Hegel. And this can take place only if the *particular* interest really becomes the *universal* interest. Hegel proceeds from an unreal antithesis and hence can resolve it only into an imagined identity which in reality is antagonistic. The bureaucracy is such an identity.

Let us now consider his exposition in detail.

The only philosophical category introduced by Hegel to define the *executive power* is that of the 'subsumption' of the individual and particular under the universal etc.

Hegel rests content with this. The category of the 'subsumption' of the particular etc. must be realized, and so he takes an empirical instance of the Prussian or modern state (just as it is – lock, stock and barrel) which can be said to realize this category among others, even though this category may fail to express its specific nature. After all, applied mathematics is also a subsumption etc. Hegel does not inquire whether this mode of subsumption is adequate or rational. He simply holds fast to the *one* category and contents himself with searching for something corresponding to it in actual existence. Hegel thus provides his logic with a political body; he does not provide us with the logic of the body politic ([Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*] §287).

With reference to the relationship of the corporations and communities to the government we learn first of all that the *administration* (i.e. appointment to the councils) 'generally' requires 'a mixture of popular election by those interested with appointment and *ratification by higher authority*. The *mixed election* of corporation officials and parish councilors thus comprises the *first relationship* between civil society and the state or executive; it is their *first identity* (§288). Even in Hegel's own view this identity is very superficial, a *mixtum compositum*, a 'mixture'. Remarkable as this superficial identity is, the antithesis it contains is more remarkable still. This '*mixed election*' results from the fact that 'it is the business of these officials' (i.e. of the corporations and communities) 'to manage the *private property* and *interests* of these *particular* spheres and, from that point of view, their authority rests on the confidence of their commonalities and professional equals. On the other hand, however, these circles of particular interests must be subordinated to the *higher interests of the state*.'

The administration of the corporation thus contains the following antithesis:

*Private property and the interests of the particular spheres versus the*

*higher interests of the state: the antithesis between private property and the state.*

It is unnecessary to point out that the resolution of this antithesis by means of *mixed election* is a mere *accommodation*, a disquisition on and an admission of an unresolved dualism that is itself a *dualism*, a 'mixture'. Even *within their own sphere* the *particular* interests of the corporations and municipalities exhibit a dualism which similarly informs the character of their *administration*.

The most striking antithesis, however, makes its appearance in the relationship between these '*particular interests common to everyone*' which 'lie outside the absolutely universal interest of the *state proper*' and this '*absolutely universal interest of the state proper*'. And once again it appears in the same place.

The maintenance of the state's universal interest, and of legality, in this sphere of particular rights, and the work of bringing these rights back to the universal, require *to be superintended by representatives of the executive power* by (a) the *executive civil servants* and (b) the higher advisory officials (who are organized into *committees*). These converge in their supreme heads who are in direct contact with the monarch.

(§289)

In passing we may take note of the establishment of these executive *committees* which are unknown in France, for example. Since Hegel defines their functions as '*advisory*', it is self-evident that they should be 'organized into committees'.

Hegel causes the 'state proper', the 'executive power', to use its 'representatives' to 'superintend the state's universal interest, and legality' within civil society, and according to him these 'government representatives' or 'executive civil servants' are the *true 'state representatives'* not 'of' civil society, but 'against' it. The antithesis between state and civil society is thus established; the state resides not in civil society but outside it; it comes into contact with it only through its '*representatives*' who have been entrusted with '*superintending the state's interest*' in civil society. The presence of these 'representatives' does not suffice to eliminate the antithesis; on the contrary, they only serve to 'legalize' and 'establish' it. Through its 'representatives' the 'state' intervenes as something alien and external to the *nature* of civil society. The 'police', the 'judiciary' and the 'administration' are not the representatives of a civil society which administers its *own* universal interests in them and through them; they are the representatives of the state, and their task is to administer the state against civil society. Hegel explains this *antithesis* in the candid remark already commented on.



The nature of the executive functions is that they are *objective* and that [ . . . ] they have been explicitly fixed by previous decisions.

(§291)

Does Hegel infer from this that they may all the more easily dispense with a 'hierarchy of knowledge', that they can be carried out wholly by 'civil society itself'? By no means.

He makes the profound observation that these functions are to be carried out by 'individuals' and that 'between an individual and his office there is no immediate *natural* link'. This is an allusion to the power of the crown, which is nothing other than the '*natural power of caprice*', to be acquired 'as a *birthright*'. The power of the crown is nothing but the representative of the natural moment in the will, of 'the rule of *physical nature in the state*'.

Accordingly, the appointment of the 'executive civil servants' to their posts is essentially different from the appointment of the 'sovereign' to his.

The *objective factor* in their appointment is knowledge [with which subjective caprice may dispense] and proof of ability. Such proof guarantees that the state will get what it requires; and since it is the sole condition of appointment, it also guarantees to *every citizen the opportunity* of joining the *class of civil servants*.

This *opportunity* to join the class of civil servants, available to every citizen, is the second bond established between civil society and the state; it is the *second identity*. It is highly superficial and dualistic in nature. Every Catholic has the opportunity of becoming a priest (i.e. of turning his back on the laity and the world). Does this mean that the priesthood ceases to be a power remote from Catholics? The fact that everyone has the opportunity of acquiring the right to *another* sphere merely proves that *his own* sphere does not embody that right in reality.

What is crucial in the true state is not the fact that every citizen has the chance to devote himself to the universal interest in the shape of a particular class, but the capacity of the universal class to be really universal, i.e. to be the class of every citizen. But Hegel starts with the assumption of a pseudo-universal, an illusory universal class,<sup>1</sup> of universality fixed in a particular class.

The identity he has established between civil society and the state is the identity of *two hostile armies* in which every soldier has the 'opportunity' to 'desert' and join the 'hostile' army. And it is perfectly true that in so doing Hegel has furnished us with an accurate description of the present empirical situation.

His treatment of the 'examination' for the bureaucracy is comparable.

In a rational state it would be more appropriate to ensure that a cobbler passed an examination than an executive civil servant, because shoe-making is a craft in the absence of which it is still possible to be a good citizen and a man in society. But the necessary 'knowledge of the state' is a precondition in the absence of which one lives outside the state, cut off from the air one breathes and from oneself. Thus the 'examination' is nothing but a Masonic initiation, the legal recognition of the knowledge of citizenship, the acknowledgement of a privilege.

This 'link' between the 'individual' and his 'office', this objective bond between the knowledge of civil society and the knowledge of state, namely, the *examination*, is nothing but the *bureaucratic baptism of knowledge*, the official recognition of the transubstantiation of profane knowledge into sacred knowledge (it is plain that in every examination the examiner is omniscient). It is not recorded that Greek and Roman statesmen ever took examinations. But then what is a Roman statesman compared to a Prussian civil servant!

In addition to the objective bond joining the individual to his official position, i.e. in addition to the *examination*, there is a different bond – that of the *sovereign's caprice*.

Since the objective qualification for the civil service is not genius (as it is for work as an artist, for example), there is of necessity an indefinite *plurality* of eligible candidates whose relative excellence is not determinable with absolute precision. The selection of one of the candidates, his nomination to office, and the grant to him of full authority to transact public business – all this, as the linking of two things, a man and his office, which in relation to each other must always be fortuitous, is the *subjective* aspect of election to office, and it must lie with the crown as the power in the state which is sovereign and has the last word.

(§292)

The sovereign is everywhere the representative of chance. The objective moment of a bureaucratic confession of faith (i.e. the examination) requires to be supplemented by the subjective moment of the sovereign's *grace*, without which faith would bear no fruit.

'The particular public functions which the monarch entrusts to officials constitute one part of the objective aspect of the sovereignty residing in the crown.' (Thus the monarchy distributes, entrusts the particular activities of the state as *functions* to the authorities; *it distributes the state among the bureaucrats*, just as the Holy Roman Church ordains its priests. The monarch is a system of emanations, and farms out the functions of state.) Hegel here distinguishes the *objective* side of the sovereignty residing in the crown from the *subjective* side. Previously he had conflated

the two. The sovereignty residing in the crown is taken here in a wholly mystical sense, much as the theologians discover their personal God in nature. [Earlier<sup>2</sup>] it was argued that the monarch is the subjective side of the sovereignty residing in the *state* (§293).

In §294 Hegel derives the *payment of salaries* to officials from the Idea. Here, in the *payment of salaries* to officials, in the fact that service for the state guarantees them security in empirical existence, the *real identity* of civil society and the state is postulated. The official's *salary* is the highest identity deduced by Hegel. This identity presupposes the transformation of the *activities of state* into *offices* and the separation of the state from civil society. Thus Hegel asserts:

What the service of the state really requires [ . . . ] is that men shall forgo the selfish and capricious satisfaction of their subjective ends [this is required by every service], and they thus acquire the right to find satisfaction in, but only in, the dutiful discharge of their public functions. In this fact, so far as public business is concerned, there lies the link between universal and particular interests which constitutes both the concept of the state and its inner stability.

In the first place, this could be said about any servant and, in the second place, it is true that the *payment of salaries* to officials does in fact constitute the inner stability of the most modern monarchies. Only the existence of officials is *guaranteed*, as distinct from the existence of the members of civil society.

It cannot have escaped Hegel's notice that he has established the executive as an *antithesis* of civil society, and indeed as a dominant polar opposite. How then does he prove the existence of an identity?

According to §295, 'the security of the state and its subjects against the *misuse* of power by ministers and their officials' lies partly in their 'hierarchical organization'. (He could hardly be unaware that the hierarchical organization is itself the *principal abuse* and that the few personal sins of the officials are as nothing as compared to their *necessary* hierarchical sins. The hierarchy punishes the official when he sins against the hierarchy or commits a sin which is superfluous from the hierarchy's point of view, but it will come to his defence as soon as the hierarchy sins through him; moreover, it is hard to convince the hierarchy of the sinfulness of its members.) The security of the state is said to lie also 'in the authority given to communities and corporations, because in itself this is a barrier against the intrusion of subjective caprice into the power entrusted to a civil servant, and it completes from below the state control which does not reach down as far as the conduct of individuals'. (Hegel writes as if unaware that this control is directed in accordance with the views of the bureaucratic hierarchy.)

Thus the second guarantee of security against bureaucratic caprice is to be found in the privileges of the corporation.

If we ask Hegel what protection civil society has against the bureaucracy, he replies:

(1) The bureaucratic '*hierarchy*'. *Control*. The fact that the opponent is himself tied hand and foot, and if he acts as hammer on what is under him, he serves as anvil to what is above him. But what protection is there against the '*hierarchy*'? The lesser evil is certainly eliminated by the greater in the sense that its impact is minimal by comparison.

(2) *Conflict*, the unresolved conflict between the bureaucracy and the corporations. *Struggle* and the *possibility* of struggle is security against defeat. Later (in §297) Hegel adds 'the sovereign working . . . at the top' as a further guarantee, but this is simply a further reference to the hierarchy.

However, Hegel mentions two additional factors (§296).

*In the official himself* – and this is supposed to humanize him and make a 'dispassionate, upright and polite demeanour . . . customary' – 'direct education in thought and ethical conduct' is supposed to act as 'a mental counterpoise' to the *mechanical* nature of his knowledge and his 'actual work'. But is it not rather that the 'mechanical' nature of his 'bureaucratic' knowledge and his 'actual work' act as a counterpoise to his 'education in thought and ethical conduct'? Will not his real mind and his real work as substance inevitably triumph over his accidental personal gifts? His 'office' is his 'substantive' being and his 'daily bread'. It is charming of Hegel to oppose 'direct education in thought and ethical conduct' to the 'mechanical' nature of bureaucratic knowledge and work! The human being in the official is supposed to save the official from himself. But what a unity! *Mental counterpoise*, indeed! What a dualistic category that turns out to be!

Hegel further adduces the 'size of the state', although this has not been successful in providing security against the caprice of the 'executive civil servant' in Russia, and it is in any event a circumstance '*external*' to the '*nature*' of bureaucracy.

Hegel has expounded the 'executive' in terms of the 'state bureaucracy'.

Here in the sphere of 'the absolutely universal interest of the state proper' we discover nothing but unresolved conflicts. The officials' *examinations* and *daily bread* are the final syntheses.

The final consecration of the bureaucracy is found by Hegel to lie in its very impotence, in its conflict with the corporations.

An identity is posited in §297 with the statement that 'civil servants and the members of the executive constitute the greater part of the middle class'. In the Addition to this paragraph Hegel extols this 'middle class' as the 'pillar' of the state 'so far as honesty and intelligence are concerned'.

It is a prime concern of the state that a middle class should be developed, but this can be done only if the state is an organic unity like the one described here, i.e. it can be done only by giving authority to spheres of particular interests, which are relatively independent, and by appointing an *army of officials* whose personal arbitrariness is broken against such authorized bodies.

It is true enough that the people can appear as one class, the *middle class*, only in an organic unity of this kind, but can such an organic unity survive by maintaining a balance between opposing privileges? Of all the various powers the executive is the hardest to analyse. To a much greater degree than the legislature it is the property of the whole people.

Later on (in the Remark to §308) Hegel describes the authentic spirit of the bureaucracy much more accurately when he talks of 'mere business routine' and 'the horizon of a restricted sphere'.

## The legislature

§298. The *legislature* is concerned (a) with the laws as such in so far as they require fresh and extended determination; and (b) with the content of *home* affairs affecting *entirely general* problems [an entirely general expression]. The legislature is itself *a part of the constitution* which is presupposed by it and to that extent lies absolutely outside the sphere directly determined by it; none the less, the constitution becomes progressively more mature in the course of the further elaboration of the laws and the advancing character of the universal business of government.

It is very striking that Hegel should emphasize that 'the legislature is itself a part of the constitution which is presupposed by it and to that extent lies absolutely outside the sphere directly determined by it'; for he had not made this comment in the case of either the sovereign or the executive powers, where it is no less apposite. But then Hegel is actually engaged in constructing the constitution in its entirety, and for that reason cannot presuppose it; however, his profundity always shows itself in the way in which he proceeds from and emphasizes the antagonistic character of the determinations (as they apply in our states).

The 'legislature is itself a part of the constitution' which 'lies absolutely outside the sphere directly determined by it'. But the constitution did not create itself. The laws which 'require fresh and extended determination' must surely have been somehow established. A legislature must exist or have existed *before* the constitution, or *apart from* the constitution. There must be a legislature apart from the real, *empirical* legis-

lature already *posited*. But, Hegel will retort, we are presupposing an *existing* state. However, Hegel is a philosopher of right and is engaged in an analysis of the generic nature of the state. He may not measure the Idea by what exists; he must rather measure what exists in accordance with the Idea.

The contradiction is simple. The *legislature* is the power to organize the universal. It is the power of the constitution. It extends beyond the constitution.

On the other hand, the legislature is a constitutional power. It is, therefore, subsumed under the constitution. The constitution is *law* for the legislature. It *has* given laws to the legislature in the past and constantly gives it laws. The legislature only has legislative power within the constitution, and the constitution would fall outside the law if it were to exceed the limits set by the legislature. And there is the conflict! There has been much nibbling away at the problem in recent French history.<sup>3</sup>

How does Hegel resolve this contradiction?

He states firstly that the *constitution* is '*presupposed* by' the legislature; 'and *to that extent* lies absolutely *outside* the sphere directly determined by it'.

'*None the less*' – none the less, 'in the course of the further elaboration of the laws and the advancing character of the universal business of government', it 'becomes progressively more mature'.

This means then that *directly* the constitution lies outside the sphere of the legislature; but *indirectly* the legislature modifies the constitution. It thus does circuitously what it may not do straightforwardly. It pulls it apart retail because it cannot modify it wholesale. By the nature of things and circumstances it achieves what, according to the nature of the constitution, it ought not to achieve at all. The things it may not do *formally, legally* and constitutionally it does *materially* and *in fact*.

Hegel has not eliminated the contradiction, but has only exchanged it for another one. He has placed the *activity* of the legislature, its *constitutional* activity, in contradiction to its constitutional *determination*. The antithesis between the *constitution* and the *legislature* remains as before. Hegel has built into his definition a contradiction between the *actual* and the *legal* activity of the legislature, i.e. a contradiction between what the legislature should be and what it really is, between what it means to do and what it really does.

How can Hegel present this contradiction as the truth? 'The advancing character of the universal business of government' explains little, because it is precisely this advancing character that requires an explanation.

In the Addition to this Paragraph Hegel adds nothing that might help to resolve these difficulties. But he does succeed in stating them more clearly.

The constitution must in and by itself be the fixed and recognized ground on which the legislature stands, and for this reason it must not first be constructed. Thus the constitution *is*, but just as essentially it *becomes*, i.e. it advances and matures. This advance is an *alteration* which is *imperceptible* and which lacks the *form of alteration*.

This means that the constitution *is* according to law (in illusion), but that it *becomes* according to reality (in truth). By definition it is immutable, but in reality it changes; however, it only changes unconsciously, lacking the form of change. Its *appearance* contradicts its *essence*. The appearance is the *conscious* law of the constitution, while the essence is its *unconscious* law, in conflict with the conscious one. The law does not reflect the true state of affairs, but rather the contrary.

Is it now the case that the dominant moment – in the state which according to Hegel is the highest incarnation of *freedom*, the incarnation of self-conscious reason – is not the law, the incarnation of reason, but the blind necessity of nature? And if now the actual laws are seen to contradict the legal definitions, then why not recognize the actual laws, namely, the laws of reason, as the law of the state? How can the dualism be retained once it has become conscious? Hegel always attempts to represent the state as the realization of the free spirit, but in reality he solves all serious contradictions by appealing to a natural necessity antithetical to freedom. Thus the transition from the particular interest to the universal interest is not achieved by a conscious law of the state, but is mediated by chance and *against* consciousness. And yet Hegel aims to show the realization of free will throughout the state! (In this we see Hegel's *substantive* point of view.)

The examples cited by Hegel in support of his view of the *gradual* modification of the constitution are badly chosen. Thus he points out that the private property of the German rulers and their families was converted into the public domain, and that the custom whereby the German Emperor used to dispense justice personally was superseded by the appointment of judges on his behalf. But in the first case, for example, the change was brought about in such a way that all state property was really transformed into the private property of the princes.

Moreover all such changes are merely individual. Whole constitutions have in fact been transformed by the gradual growth of new needs and the collapse of the old etc., but *new* constitutions have always depended on an actual revolution for their introduction.

Hegel concludes:

Hence the advance from one state of affairs to another is tranquil *in appearance* and unnoticed. In this way a constitution changes over a

long period of time into something quite different from what it was originally.

The category of *gradual* transition first is historically false and second, it explains nothing.

If the constitution is not merely to be subject to change, if this illusory appearance is not merely to be shattered by force, if man is to perform consciously what otherwise he would be compelled by the force of circumstance to perform unconsciously, it is necessary for the movement of the constitution, its *progress*, to be made into *its principle*. And this means that the real incarnation of the constitution, namely, the people, would become the principle of the constitution. Progress itself would then be the constitution.

Does this mean that the 'constitution' should be thought of as belonging to the sphere of the 'legislature'? The question makes sense only if (1) the political state exists purely as the formal shell of the real state, if the political state is a separate realm, if it exists as the 'constitution'; and (2) if the legislature has a different origin from the executive etc.

The legislature made the French Revolution; in fact, wherever it has emerged as the dominant factor it has brought forth great, organic, universal revolutions. It has not attacked the constitution as such but only a particular antiquated constitution; this is because the legislature acted as the representative of the people, of the species-will [*Gattungswillen*]. In contrast to this, the executive has made all the petty revolutions, the retrograde revolutions, the reactions. Its revolutions were not fought against an old institution and on behalf of a new one; they were fought against the constitution itself, simply because the executive was the representative of the particular will, subjective caprice, the magical aspect of the will.

If the question is to make any sense at all, it can only mean: does the people have the right to make a new constitution? And this question can only be answered unreservedly in the affirmative, for a constitution that has ceased to be the real expression of the will of the people has become a practical illusion.

The contradiction between the constitution and the legislature is nothing but the *conflict within the constitution itself*, a contradiction in the concept of the constitution.

The constitution is nothing but an accommodation between the political and the unpolitical state; inevitably, therefore, it is itself a synthesis of essentially heterogeneous powers. Hence it is impossible for the law to proclaim that one of these powers, a part of the constitution, should have the right to modify the whole, the constitution itself.

If the constitution is at all to be considered as a particular, it must be thought of as part of a whole.



If by the constitution we mean the universal, fundamental determinants of the rational will, it follows that every people (state) must have this as its premise and that this premise must constitute its political credo. This is actually a matter of knowledge rather than will. The will of the people may not transcend the laws of reason any more than the will of an individual. In the case of an irrational people we cannot speak of the rational organization of the state. Moreover, in the *Philosophy of Right* our concern must be with the species-will.

The legislature does not make the law; it only discovers and formulates it.<sup>4</sup>

Attempts have been made to solve this contradiction by distinguishing between *assemblée constituante* and *assemblée constituée*.<sup>5</sup>

§299. Legislative business is more precisely determined, in relation to private individuals, under these two heads: (α) provision by the state for their well-being and happiness, and (β) the exaction of services from them. The former comprises the laws dealing with all sorts of private rights, the rights of communities, corporations and organizations affecting the entire state, and further it indirectly (see Paragraph 298) comprises the whole of the constitution. As for the services to be exacted, it is only if these are reduced to terms of *money*, the really existent and universal *value* of both things and services, that they can be fixed justly and at the same time in such a way that any *particular* tasks and services which an individual may perform come to be mediated through his own arbitrary will.

In the Remark on this Paragraph Hegel himself comments on this definition of the business of the legislature:

The proper object of universal legislature may be distinguished in a general way from the proper function of administrative officials or of some kind of state regulation, in that the content of the former is *wholly universal*, i.e. determinate laws, while it is what is *particular* in content which falls to the latter, together with ways and means of *enforcing* the law. This distinction, however, is not a hard and fast one, because a law, by being a law, is *ab initio* something more than a mere command in general terms (such as 'Thou shalt not kill' [ . . . ]). A law must in itself be something *determinate*, but the more determinate it is, the more readily are its terms capable of being carried out as they stand. At the same time, however, to give to laws such a fully detailed determinacy would give them empirical features subject inevitably to alteration in the course of their being actually carried out, and this would contravene their character as laws. *The organic unity* of the powers of the state itself implies that it is one single mind which

both firmly establishes the universal and also brings it into its determinate reality and carries it out.

However, it is precisely this *organic* unity which Hegel has failed to justify logically. The different powers each have a different principle. Each, moreover, is a definite reality. To flee from the genuine conflict between them by taking refuge in an *imaginary* 'organic unity', instead of proving them to be the various moments of an organic unity, is therefore an empty, mystical evasion.

The first unsolved contradiction was the conflict between the *legislature* and the *constitution as a whole*. The second is the conflict between the *legislature* and the *executive*, between the law and its implementation.

The second provision of this *Paragraph* is that *money* is the only service exacted from individuals by the state.

Hegel adduces these reasons in support of this claim:

(1) Money is the really existent and universal *value* of both things and services.

(2) It is only by this reduction that the services required can be determined in a *just* manner.

(3) Only in this way can the *particular* tasks and services which an individual may perform come to be mediated through his own arbitrary will.

In the Remark Hegel argues:

*ad 1.* In the state it may come as a surprise at first that the numerous aptitudes, possessions, pursuits and talents of its members, together with the infinitely varied richness of life intrinsic to these – all of which are at the same time linked with their owner's mentality – are not subject to direct levy by the state. It lays claim only to a *single* form of riches, namely *money*. Services requisitioned for the defence of the state in war arise for the first time in connection with the duty considered in the next subdivision of this book. [We shall postpone until later discussion of the personal liability to military service, not because of the next subdivision, but for other reasons.]

In fact, however, money is not one particular type of wealth among others, but the universal form of all types so far as they are expressed in an external embodiment and so can be taken as '*things*'.

'In our day,' he continues in the Addition, 'the state *purchases* what it requires.'

*ad 2.* Only by being translated into terms of this extreme culmination of externality [sc. in which the various talents are expressed in an

external embodiment and so can be taken as '*things*'] can services *exacted* by the state be fixed *quantitatively* and so justly and *equitably*.

And in the Addition we find: 'By means of money, however, the *justice of equality* can be achieved much more efficiently. Otherwise, if assessment depended on concrete ability, a talented man would be more heavily taxed than an untalented one.'

*ad 3.* In Plato's *Republic*, the Guardians are left to allot individuals to their particular classes and impose on them their *particular* tasks [ . . . ] Under the feudal monarchies the services required from vassals were equally indeterminate, but they had also to serve in their *particular* capacity, e.g. as judges. The same particular character pertains to tasks imposed in the East and in Egypt in connection with colossal architectural undertakings, and so forth. In these circumstances the principle of *subjective freedom* is lacking, i.e. the principle that the individual's substantive activity – which in any case becomes something particular in content in services like those mentioned – shall be mediated through his *particular volition*. This is a right which can be secured only when the demand for service takes the form of a demand for something of universal value, and it is this right which has brought with it this conversion of the state's demands for cash.

And in the Addition, he remarks:

In our day, the state *purchases* what it requires. This may at first sight seem an abstract, heartless, and dead state of affairs, and for the state to be satisfied with abstract services may also look like decadence in the state. But the principle of the modern state requires that the whole of an individual's activity shall be mediated through his will [ . . . ] But nowadays *respect* for subjective freedom is publicly recognized precisely in the fact that the state lays hold of a man only by that which is capable of being held.

Do what you wish. Pay what you must.

In the opening words of the Addition Hegel states:

The two sides of the constitution bear respectively on the rights and services of individuals. Services are now almost entirely reduced to money payments, and military service is now almost the only personal one exacted.

§300. 'In the legislature *as a whole* the other powers are the first two moments which are effective, (i) the *monarchy* as that to which ultimate

decisions belong; (ii) the *executive* as the advisory body since it is the moment possessed of ( $\alpha$ ) a concrete knowledge and oversight of the whole state in its numerous facets and the real principles *firmly established* within it, and ( $\beta$ ) a knowledge in particular of what the state's power needs. The last moment in the legislature is the *Estates*.

The monarchy and the executive are . . . the legislature. If, however, the legislature is the *whole*, then the monarchy and the executive must surely be the moments of the legislature. The additional element of the *Estates* is thus only the legislature, or it is the legislature *as distinct from* the monarchy and the executive.

§301. The *Estates* have the function of bringing matters of universal concern into existence not only *implicitly* [*an sich*], but also *explicitly* [*für sich*], i.e. of bringing into existence the moment of subjective *formal freedom*, the public consciousness as an *empirical universal*, of which the thoughts and opinions of the *Many* are particulars.

The *Estates*<sup>6</sup> are a deputation of civil society to the state, with which, as the 'Many', they are contrasted. The Many are supposed for a moment *consciously* to treat matters of universal concern as if they were their own, as matters concerning the *public consciousness*, which according to Hegel is nothing but the '*empirical universal* of which the thoughts and opinions of the *Many* are particulars' (and this is in fact the case in modern monarchies, even constitutional ones). It is significant that Hegel should have such great respect for the state-mind – the ethical mind, state-consciousness – but when it actually and empirically appears before his very eyes, he should regard it with such undiluted contempt.

And this is the key to the entire riddle of his mysticism. The same fantastic abstraction according to which *state-consciousness* is to be discovered in the inappropriate form of the *bureaucracy* with its hierarchy of knowledge, and which then uncritically accepts this inappropriate form as a *fully adequate* reality, this same fantastic abstraction does not hesitate to declare that the real, *empirical* state-mind, *public consciousness*, is a mere hotch-potch made up of 'the thoughts and opinions of the Many'. Just as this abstraction credits the bureaucracy with an essence alien to it, so it also attributes to the true essence the inappropriate form of mere appearance. Hegel idealizes the bureaucracy and empiricizes public consciousness. Hegel can treat real public consciousness very marginally because he treats the marginal consciousness as the true public one. He may all the more readily ignore the real existence of the state-mind because he thinks that he has realized it sufficiently in its supposedly existent forms. As long as the state-mind mystically haunted the

antechambers it was treated with obsequious courtesy. Here, where we meet it in person, it is scarcely heeded.

'The Estates have the function of bringing matters of universal concern into existence not only *implicitly*, but also *explicitly*.' Moreover, they bring them explicitly into existence as the 'public consciousness', as 'the *empirical universal* of which the thoughts and opinions of the Many are particulars'.

The development of 'matters of universal concern' into the subject, and thus into independent existence, is represented here as a moment in the life-process of these 'matters of universal concern'. Rather than make the subjects objectify themselves in 'matters of universal concern', Hegel causes the 'matters of universal concern' to extend into the 'subject'. The 'subjects' do not require 'matters of universal concern' for their own true concern, but matters of universal concern stand in need of the subjects for their *formal* existence. It is a matter of concern to the 'matters of universal concern' that they should also exist as subjects.

Above all, we must take a closer look at the distinction between the *implicit* and the *explicit* existence of matters of universal concern [between their *Ansichsein* and *Fürsichsein*].

'Matters of universal concern' already exist '*implicitly*', in themselves, as the business of the executive etc.; they exist without *really* being matters of *universal* concern; they are in fact anything but that, for they are of no concern to '*civil society*'. They have already achieved their *essential*, implicit existence. If they now really enter 'public consciousness' and achieve 'empirical universality', this is purely formal and amounts to no more than a *symbolic* achievement of reality. The 'formal' or 'empirical' existence of matters of universal concern is separate from their *substantive existence*. The truth of the matter is that the *implicit* 'matters of universal concern' are not *really universal*, and the real, *empirical* matters of universal concern are purely *formal*.

Hegel thus separates *content* and *form*, *implicit* and *explicit* existence, and admits the latter only *formally* and externally. The content is fully developed and assumes many forms which are not the forms of that content, and it clearly follows from this that the form which should be the real form of the content does not in fact have this content as its own.

The *matters of universal concern* are now complete without having become the real concern of the people. The real affairs of the people have sprung into being without the interference of the people. The Estates are the illusory existence of state affairs conceived as the affairs of the people. They are the illusion that *matters of universal concern* are really matters of universal, public concern or the *illusion* that the affairs of the people are matters of universal concern. Things have come to such a pass both in our states and in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* that the tautology that 'matters of universal concern are matters of universal concern' can

only make its appearance as an *illusion of the practical consciousness*. The *Estates* are the *political illusion of civil society*. Subjective freedom is purely *formal* for Hegel because he refuses to regard objective freedom as the realization, the activation of subjective freedom (although it is of course important that a free action should be performed freely, that freedom should not rule as an unconscious natural instinct of society). Because he has endowed the presumed or real content of freedom with a mystical persona, it is inevitable that the real subject of freedom should be assigned a purely formal significance.

The separation of *implicit* from *explicit* existence, of substance from subject, is a piece of abstract mysticism.

In the Remark Hegel expounds the Estates very much in terms of a 'formal', 'illusory' phenomenon.

Both the *knowledge* and the *volition* of the 'Estates' are either unimportant or suspect, i.e. the Estates are not a *meaningful predicate*.

1. The idea uppermost in men's minds when they speak about the necessity or the expediency of 'summoning the Estates' is generally something of this sort: (i) The deputies of the people, or even the people themselves, *must know best* what is in their best interest, and (ii) their will for its promotion is undoubtedly the most disinterested. So far as the first of these points is concerned, however, the truth is that if 'people' means a particular section of the citizens, then it means precisely that section which does *not* know what it wills. To know what one wills, and still more to know what the absolute will, Reason, wills, is the fruit of profound knowledge and insight [so common in bureaucrats], precisely the things which are *not* popular.

Further on he says of the Estates themselves:

The highest civil servants necessarily have a deeper and more comprehensive insight into the nature of the state's organization and requirements. They are also more habituated to the business of government and have a greater skill in it, so that even without the Estates they are *able* to do what is best, just as they also continually *have* to do what is best while the Estates are in session.

And of course this is a completely true picture of the organization described by Hegel.

2. As for the conspicuously *good will* for the general welfare which the Estates are supposed to possess, it has been pointed out already [ . . . ] that to regard the will of the executive as bad or as less good [than that of the ruled]<sup>7</sup> is a presupposition characteristic of the rabble or of

the negative outlook generally. This presupposition might at once be answered on its own ground by the counter-charge that the Estates start from isolated individuals, from a private point of view, from particular interests, and so are inclined to devote their activities to these at the expense of the general interests, while *per contra* the other moments in the power of the state explicitly take up the standpoint of the state from the start and devote themselves to the universal end.

The *knowledge* and *good will* of the Estates are, therefore, partly superfluous and partly suspect. The people does not know what it wants. The Estates do not possess the same degree of knowledge of state affairs as the civil servants who have a monopoly of it. In the task of dealing with 'matters of universal concern' the Estates are quite superfluous. The civil servants *are able* to do what is best without the Estates, and indeed they *must* do what is best despite the Estates. Viewed substantively, then, the Estates are a pure luxury. Their existence is a mere *form* in the most literal sense of the word.

The *good will* of the Estates, moreover, is suspect because their actions are rooted in their private standpoint and their private interests. The truth of the matter is that private interests are their universal concern, and not that universal concerns are their private interest. But how curious that the 'universal interest' should acquire the *form* of the universal interest in a will which does not know what it wants, which does not possess any special knowledge of universal interest and whose actual content is an interest opposed to itself.

In the modern state, as in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, the *conscious, true reality of the universal interest is merely formal*, in other words, only *what is formal constitutes the real, universal interest*.

Hegel should not be blamed for describing the essence of the modern state as it is, but for identifying what is with the *essence of the state*. That the rational is real is *contradicted by the irrational reality* which at every point shows itself to be the opposite of what it asserts, and to assert the opposite of what it is.

Instead of showing how 'universal concern' acquires 'subjective and therefore real universality' and how it acquires the form of the universal concern, Hegel shows only that *formlessness* is its subjectivity, and a form without content must be formless. The form acquired by matters of universal concern in a state which is not the state of such universal concerns can only be a non-form, a self-deceiving, self-contradictory form, a *pseudo-form* whose illusory nature will show itself for what it is.

Hegel only needs the luxury of the Estates for the sake of logic. The *being-for-itself* [*Fürsichsein*] of the universal interest stands in need of an actual empirical existence. Hegel does not look for an adequate realization of the 'being-for-itself of the universal concern'; he is content to

find an empirical existent which can be resolved into this logical category. This turns out to be the Estates, and he even points out himself what a wretched, self-contradictory existence it is. And to cap it all, he rebukes ordinary consciousness because it does not rest content with this satisfaction of logic, because it refuses to dissolve reality into logic by means of *arbitrary* abstraction, but would rather see logic translated into truly objective reality.

I say '*arbitrary* abstraction'. For, since the executive wills, knows and realizes the *universal concern*, since it emerges from the people and is itself an empirical manifold (Hegel himself informs us that it is not the totality), why should not the executive be defined as the 'being-for-itself of the universal concern'? And why should the Estates not be regarded as its *being-in-itself* [*Ansichsein*], in view of the fact that matters of universal concern acquire light and definition and implementation and independence only in and through the executive?

But the true antithesis is this: 'the universal concern' must be *represented* somewhere in the state as 'real', i.e. as an 'empirical universal concern'; it must become manifest somewhere or other wearing the crown and the robes of the universal – whereupon it automatically becomes a mere role, an illusion.

The antithesis is between the 'universal' as '*form*', in the 'form of universality', and the 'universal as content'.

In science, for example, an 'individual' can perform the tasks required by the universal concern, and in fact these tasks are always performed by individuals. But science becomes truly universal only when it is no longer an individual affair but becomes a social one. This changes its content as well as its form. However, we are discussing the state, and here the people is itself the universal concern; we are thus concerned with a will which can achieve its true existence as species-will only in the self-conscious will of the people. We are concerned, moreover, with the Idea of the state.

In the modern state the 'universal concern' and anything to do with it is a monopoly, and, conversely, the monopolies are the real universal concerns: this modern state has formed the strange idea of taking possession of the 'universal concern' as a *mere form*. (The truth of the matter is that only the *form* is a universal concern.) It has thereby discovered the form most appropriate to its content which is only the semblance of the real universal concern.

The constitutional state is that form of the state in which the state-interest, i.e. the real interest of the people, is present only *formally*, though as a definite form alongside the real state; the state-interest has here again *formally* acquired reality as the interest of the people, but this reality is destined to remain *formal*. It has become a *formality*, the spice of popular existence, a *ceremony*. The *Estates* are the lie, *legally*



*sanctioned* in constitutional states, that the *state* is the *interest of the people* or that the *people* is the *interest of the state*. The lie will be revealed in the *content*. It established itself in the legislature because the content of the legislature is the universal and, more a business of knowledge than volition, it is the *metaphysical* state power. Had the same lie assumed the form of the executive, either it would break down at once or it would transform itself into a truth. The metaphysical state power was the most suitable repository for the metaphysical universal state-illusion.

## Notes

1 That is the bureaucracy, Hegel's 'universal class' (*der allgemeine Stand*). Hegel argues that the bureaucracy is a *particular* class but that its aims are identical with the *universal* aims of the state.

2 German editors' addition.

3 See below, p. 153.

4 Marx crossed out the following: 'so that in democracy, accordingly, the legislature does not decide the organization of the whole (note by editor of the *Marx-Engels Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)*).

5 Constituent assembly and constituted assembly.

6 An 'estate' (*Stand*) is an order or class of men in civil society which is distinguished by trade, profession, status etc. In the sphere of political society 'Estates' (*Stände*) is a term used to designate that body which in the field of legislation represents the various particular interests of civil society.

7 Knox's addition.

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## Extract from *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844)

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Karl Marx

### Critique of Hegel's dialectic and general philosophy

This is perhaps the place to make a few remarks, by way of explanation and justification, about the Hegelian dialectic, both in general, and in particular as expounded in the *Phenomenology* and *Logic*, as well as about its relation to the modern critical movement.

Modern German criticism was so preoccupied with the old world and so entangled during the course of its development with its subject matter that it had a completely uncritical attitude to the method of criticism and was completely unaware of the *seemingly formal* but in fact *essential* question of how we now stand in relation to the Hegelian *dialectic*. The lack of awareness about the relation of modern criticism to Hegelian philosophy in general and to the dialectic in particular has been so pronounced that critics like Strauss and Bruno Bauer are still, at least implicitly, imprisoned within Hegelian logic, the first completely so and the second in his *Synoptiker*<sup>1</sup> (where, in opposition to Strauss, he substitutes the 'self-consciousness' of abstract man for the substance of abstract nature) and even in his *Das entdeckte Christentum*.<sup>2</sup> For example, in *Das entdeckte Christentum* we find the following passage:

'As if self-consciousness, in positing the world, that which is different, and in producing itself in that which it produces, since it then does away with the difference between what it has produced and itself and since it is only in the producing and in the movement that it is itself – as if it did not have its purpose in this movement,' etc.<sup>3</sup> Or again: 'They (the French materialists) could not yet see that the movement of the universe only really comes to exist for itself and enters into unity with itself as the movement of self-consciousness.'<sup>4</sup>

These expressions are not even different in their language from the Hegelian conception. They reproduce it word for word.

How little awareness there was of the relation to Hegel's dialectic while this criticism was under way (Bauer's *Synoptiker*), and how little even the completed criticism of the subject matter contributed to such an awareness, is clear from Bauer's *Gute Sache der Freiheit*,<sup>5</sup> where he dismisses Herr Gruppe's impertinent question 'and now what will happen to logic?' by referring him to future Critics.

But now that Feuerbach, both in his 'Thesen' in the *Anekdoten*<sup>6</sup> and in greater detail in his *Philosophie der Zukunft*,<sup>7</sup> has destroyed the foundations of the old dialectic and philosophy, that very school of Criticism, which was itself incapable of taking such a step but instead watched while it was taken, has proclaimed itself the pure, resolute, absolute Criticism which has achieved self-clarity, and in its spiritual pride has reduced the whole process of history to the relation between the rest of the world, which comes into the category of the 'masses', and itself. It has assimilated all dogmatic antithesis into the *one* dogmatic antithesis between its own sagacity and the stupidity of the world, between the critical Christ and mankind – the 'rabble'. It has daily and hourly demonstrated its own excellence against the mindlessness of the masses and has finally announced that the critical *Day of Judgment* is drawing near, when the whole of fallen humanity will be arrayed before it and divided into groups, whereupon each group will receive its certificate of poverty. The school of Criticism has made known in print its superiority to human feelings and the world, above which it sits enthroned in sublime solitude, with nothing but an occasional roar of sarcastic laughter from its Olympian lips. After all these delightful capers of idealism (Young Hegelianism) which is expiring in the form of Criticism, it (the critical school) has not once voiced so much as a suspicion of the need for a critical debate with its progenitor, the Hegelian dialectic. It has not even indicated a critical attitude to Feuerbach's dialectic. A completely uncritical attitude towards itself.

Feuerbach is the only person who has a *serious* and a *critical* attitude to the Hegelian dialectic and who has made real discoveries in this field. He is the true conqueror of the old philosophy. The magnitude of his achievement and the quiet simplicity with which he presents it to the world are in marked contrast to the others.

Feuerbach's great achievement is:

(1) To have shown that philosophy is nothing more than religion brought into thought and developed in thought, and that it is equally to be condemned as another form and mode of existence of the estrangement of man's nature.

(2) To have founded *true materialism* and *real science* by making the social relation of 'man to man' the basic principle of his theory.

(3) To have opposed to the negation of the negation, which claims to

be the absolute positive, the positive which is based upon itself and positively grounded in itself.

Feuerbach explains the Hegelian dialectic, and in so doing justifies taking the positive, that is sensuously ascertained, as his starting point, in the following way:

Hegel starts out from the estrangement of substance (in logical terms: from the infinite, the abstractly universal), from the absolute and fixed abstraction. In ordinary language, he starts out from religion and theology.

Second, he supersedes the infinite and posits the actual, the sensuous, the real, the finite, the particular. (Philosophy as supersession of religion and theology.)

Third, he once more supersedes the positive, and restores the abstraction, the infinite. Restoration of religion and theology.

Feuerbach therefore conceives the negation of the negation *only* as a contradiction of philosophy with itself, as philosophy which affirms theology (supersession etc.) after having superseded it and hence affirms it in opposition to itself.

The positing or self-affirmation and self-confirmation present in the negation of the negation is regarded as a positing which is not yet sure of itself, which is still preoccupied with its opposite, which doubts itself and therefore stands in need of proof, which does not prove itself through its own existence, which is not admitted. It is therefore directly counterposed to that positing which is sensuously ascertained and grounded in itself. (Feuerbach sees negation of the negation, the concrete concept, as thought which surpasses itself in thought and as thought which strives to be direct awareness, nature, reality.)<sup>8</sup>

But since he conceives the negation of the negation from the aspect of the positive relation contained within it as the true and only positive and from the aspect of the negative relation contained within it as the only true act and self-realizing act of all being, Hegel has merely discovered the *abstract, logical, speculative* expression of the movement of history. This movement of history is not yet the *real* history of man as a given subject; it is simply the *process of his creation*, the *history of his emergence*. We shall explain both the abstract form of this movement and the difference between Hegel's conception of this process and that of modern criticism as formulated in Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* or rather, the *critical* form of a movement which in Hegel is still uncritical.

Let us take a look at Hegel's system. We must begin with his *Phenomenology*, which is the true birthplace and secret of the Hegelian philosophy.

## Phenomenology<sup>9</sup>

### A Self-consciousness

I. *Consciousness* (a) Certainty in sense experience, or the 'this' and meaning. (b) *Perception* or the thing with its properties and *illusion*. (c) Power and understanding, phenomena and the super-sensible world.

II. *Self-consciousness*. The truth of certainty of oneself. (a) Independence and dependence of self-consciousness, lordship and servitude. (b) Freedom of self-consciousness. Stoicism, scepticism, the unhappy consciousness.

III. *Reason*. Certainty and truth of reason. (a) Observational reason; observation of nature and of self-consciousness. (b) Realization of rational self-consciousness through itself. Pleasure and necessity. The law of the heart and the madness of self-conceit. Virtue and the way of the world. (c) Individuality which is real in and for itself. The spiritual animal kingdom and deception or the thing itself. Legislative reason. Reason which tests laws.

### B Mind

I. *True* mind, morality.

II. Self-estranged mind, culture.

III. Mind certain of itself, morality.

### C Religion

*Natural* religion, the *religion of art*, *revealed* religion.

### D Absolute knowledge

Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* begins with logic, with *pure speculative thought*, and ends with *absolute knowledge*, with the self-conscious, self-comprehending philosophical or absolute mind, i.e. super-human, abstract mind. In the same way, the whole of the *Encyclopaedia* is nothing but the *extended being* of philosophical mind, its self-objectification; and the philosophical mind is nothing but the estranged mind of the world thinking within its self-estrangement, i.e. conceiving itself abstractly. *Logic* is the *currency* of the mind, the speculative *thought-value* of man and of nature, their essence which has become completely indifferent to all real determinateness and hence unreal, *alienated* thought, and therefore thought which abstracts from nature and from real man; *abstract* thought. The *external character of this abstract thought* . . . nature as it is for this abstract thought. Nature is external to it, its loss of self; it grasps nature externally, as abstract thought, but as alienated abstract thought. Finally *mind*, which is thought returning to its birthplace and which as anthropological, phenomenological, psychological, moral, artistic-religious mind is not valid for itself until it finally discovers and affirms itself as *absolute*

knowledge and therefore as absolute, i.e. abstract mind, receives its conscious and appropriate existence. For its real existence is *abstraction*.

Hegel commits a double error.

The first appears most clearly in the *Phenomenology*, which is the birthplace of Hegelian philosophy. When, for example, Hegel conceives wealth, the power of the state etc. as entities estranged from the being of man, he conceives them only in their thought form . . . They are entities of thought, and therefore simply an estrangement of *pure*, i.e. abstract, philosophical thought. Therefore the entire movement ends with absolute knowledge. What these objects are estranged from and what they confront with their claim to reality is none other than abstract thought. The *philosopher*, himself an abstract form of estranged man, sets himself up as the *yardstick* of the estranged world. The entire *history of alienation* and the entire *retraction* of this alienation is therefore nothing more than the *history of the production* of abstract, i.e. absolute, thought, of logical, speculative thought. *Estrangement*, which thus forms the real interest of this alienation and its supersession, is the opposition of *in itself* and *for itself*, of *consciousness* and *self-consciousness*, of *object* and *subject*, i.e. the opposition within thought itself of abstract thought and sensuous reality or real sensuousness. All other oppositions and the movements of these oppositions are only the *appearance*, the *mask*, the *exoteric* form of these two opposites which are alone important and which form the *meaning* of these other, profane oppositions. It is not the fact that the human essence *objectifies* itself in an *inhuman* way, in opposition to itself, but that it *objectifies* itself in *distinction* from and in *opposition* to abstract thought which constitutes the essence of estrangement as it exists and as it is to be superseded.

The appropriation of man's objectified and estranged essential powers is therefore first only an *appropriation* which takes place in *consciousness*, in pure thought, i.e. in *abstraction*. In the *Phenomenology*, therefore, despite its thoroughly negative and critical appearance and despite the fact that its criticism is genuine and often well ahead of its time, the uncritical positivism and equally uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works, the philosophical dissolution and restoration of the empirical world, is already to be found in latent form, in embryo, as a potentiality and a secret. Second, the vindication of the objective world for man – for example the recognition that *sensuous* consciousness is not *abstractly* sensuous consciousness, but *humanly* sensuous consciousness; that religion, wealth etc. are only the estranged reality of *human* objectification, of *human* essential powers born into work, and therefore only the *way* to true *human* reality – this appropriation, or the insight into this process, therefore appears in Hegel in such a way that *sense perception*, *religion*, the power of the state etc. are spiritual entities, for *mind* alone is the *true* essence of man, and the true form of mind is the thinking

mind, the logical, speculative mind. The *humanity* of nature and of nature as produced by history, of man's products, is apparent from the fact that they are *products* of abstract mind and therefore factors of the *mind*, *entities of thought*. The *Phenomenology* is therefore concealed and mystifying criticism, criticism which has not attained self-clarity; but in so far as it grasps the *estrangement* of man – even though man appears only in the form of mind – *all* the elements of criticism are concealed within it, and often *prepared* and *worked out* in a way that goes far beyond Hegel's own point of view. The 'unhappy consciousness', the 'honest consciousness', the struggle of the 'noble and base consciousness' etc. etc.: these separate sections contain the *critical* elements – but still in estranged form – of entire spheres, such as religion, the state, civil life and so forth. Just as the *entity*, the *object*, appears as a thought-entity, so also the *subject* is always *consciousness* or *self-consciousness*; or rather, the object appears only as *abstract* consciousness and man only as *self-consciousness*. The various forms of estrangement which occur are therefore merely different forms of consciousness and self-consciousness. Since abstract consciousness, which is how the object is conceived, is *in itself* only one moment in the differentiation of self-consciousness, the result of the movement is the identity of self-consciousness and consciousness, absolute knowledge, the movement of abstract thought no longer directed outwards but proceeding only within itself i.e. the result is the dialectic of pure thought.

The importance of Hegel's *Phenomenology* and its final result – the dialectic of negativity as the moving and producing principle – lies in the fact that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, objectification as loss of object [*Entgegenständlichung*], as alienation and as supersession of this alienation; that he therefore grasps the nature of *labour* and conceives objective man – true, because real man – as the result of his *own labour*. The *real*, *active* relation of man to himself as a species-being, or the realization of himself as a real species-being, i.e. as a human being, is only possible if he really employs all his *species-powers* – which again is only possible through the cooperation of mankind and as a result of history – and treats them as objects, which is at first only possible in the form of estrangement.

We shall now demonstrate in detail the one-sidedness and the limitations of Hegel, as observed in the closing chapter of the *Phenomenology*. This chapter ('Absolute knowledge') contains the concentrated essence of the *Phenomenology*, its relation to the dialectic, and Hegel's *consciousness* of both and their interrelations.

For the present, let us observe that Hegel adopts the standpoint of modern political economy. He sees *labour* as the *essence*, the self-confirming essence, of man; he sees only the positive and not the negative side of labour. Labour is *man's coming to be for himself* within

*alienation* or as an *alienated man*. The only labour Hegel knows and recognizes is *abstract mental* labour. So that which above all constitutes the *essence* of philosophy – the *alienation of man who knows himself* or *alienated science that thinks itself* – Hegel grasps as its essence, and is therefore able to bring together the separate elements of previous philosophies and present his philosophy as *the* philosophy. What other philosophers did – that they conceived separate moments of nature and of man's life as moments of self-consciousness, indeed, of abstract self-consciousness – this Hegel *knows* by *doing* philosophy. Therefore his science is absolute.

Let us now proceed to our subject.

'Absolute knowledge'. The last chapter of the *Phenomenology*.

The main point is that the *object of consciousness* is nothing else but *self-consciousness*, or that the object is only *objectified self-consciousness*, self-consciousness as object. (The positing of man = self-consciousness.)

It is therefore a question of surmounting the *object of consciousness*. *Objectivity* as such is seen as an *estranged* human relationship which does not correspond to *human nature*, to self-consciousness. The *reappropriation* of the objective essence of man, produced in the form of estrangement as something alien, therefore means transcending not only *estrangement* but also *objectivity*. That is to say, man is regarded as a *non-objective, spiritual* being.

Hegel describes the process of *surmounting the object of consciousness* in the following way:

The *object* does not only show itself as *returning* into the *self* (according to Hegel that is a *one-sided* conception of the movement, a conception which grasps only one side). Man is equated with self. But the self is only *abstractly* conceived man, man produced by abstraction. Man is self [*selbstisch*]. His eyes, his ears etc. have the *quality of self*; each one of his essential powers has this quality of *self*. But therefore it is quite wrong to say that *self-consciousness* has eyes, ears, essential powers. *Self-consciousness* is rather a quality of human nature, of the human eye, etc.; human nature is not a quality of *self-consciousness*.

The self abstracted and fixed for itself is man as *abstract egoist*, *egoism* raised to its pure abstraction in thought. (We shall come back to this later.)

For Hegel *human nature, man*, is equivalent to *self-consciousness*. All estrangement of human nature is therefore *nothing* but *estrangement of self-consciousness*. Hegel regards the estrangement of self-consciousness not as the *expression*, reflected in knowledge and in thought, of the *real* estrangement of human nature. On the contrary, *actual* estrangement, estrangement which appears real, is in its innermost hidden nature – which philosophy first brings to light – nothing more than the *appearance* of the estrangement of real human nature, of *self-consciousness*. The



science which comprehends this is therefore called *phenomenology*. All reappropriation of estranged objective being therefore appears as an incorporation into self-consciousness; the man who takes hold of his being is *only* the self-consciousness which takes hold of objective being. The return of the object into the self is therefore the reappropriation of the object.

Expressed *comprehensively*, the *surmounting of the object of consciousness* means:

(1) That the object as such presents itself to consciousness as something disappearing.

(2) That it is the alienation of self-consciousness which establishes thingness [*Dingheit*].

(3) That this alienation has not only a *negative* but also a *positive* significance.

(4) That this significance is not only *for us* or in itself, but *for self-consciousness itself*.

(5) *For self-consciousness* the negative of the object, its own supersession of itself, has a *positive* significance – or self-consciousness *knows* the nullity of the object – in that self-consciousness alienates itself, for in this alienation it establishes *itself* as object or establishes the object as itself, for the sake of the indivisible unity of *being-for-itself*.

(6) On the other hand, this other moment is also present in the process, namely, that self-consciousness has superseded and taken back into itself this alienation and objectivity, and is therefore *at home* in its other-being *as such*.

(7) This is the movement of *consciousness*, and consciousness is therefore the totality of its moments.

(8) Similarly, consciousness must have related itself to the object in terms of the totality of its determinations, and have grasped it in terms of each of them. This totality of determinations makes the object *intrinsically* [*an sich*] a *spiritual being*, and it becomes that in reality for consciousness through the apprehending of each one of these determinations as determinations of *self* or through what we earlier called the spiritual attitude towards them.<sup>10</sup>

*ad* (1) That the object as such presents itself to consciousness as something disappearing is the above-mentioned *return of the object into the self*.

*ad* (2) The *alienation of self-consciousness* establishes *thingness*. Because man is equivalent to self-consciousness, his alienated objective being or *thingness* (that which is an *object for him*, and the only true object for him is that which is an essential object, i.e. his *objective* essence; since it is not *real man*, and therefore not *nature*, for man is *human nature*, who becomes as such the subject, but only the abstraction of man, self-consciousness, thingness can only be alienated

self-consciousness) is the equivalent of *alienated self-consciousness*, and *thingness* is established by this alienation. It is entirely to be expected that a living natural being equipped and endowed with objective, i.e. material essential powers should have *real* natural *objects* for the objects of its being, and that its self-alienation should take the form of the establishment of a *real*, objective world, but as something *external* to it, a world which does not belong to its being and which overpowers it. There is nothing incomprehensible or mysterious about it. It would only be mysterious if the contrary were true. But it is equally clear that a *self-consciousness*, through its alienation, can only establish *thingness*, i.e. an abstract thing, a thing of abstraction and not a *real* thing. It is also clear that thingness is therefore in no way something *independent* or *substantial vis-à-vis* self-consciousness; it is a mere creature, a *postulate* of self-consciousness. And what is postulated, instead of confirming itself, is only a confirmation of the act of postulating; an act which, for a single moment, concentrates its energy as product and *apparently* confers upon that product – but only for a moment – the role of an independent, real being.

When real, corporeal *man*, his feet planted firmly on the solid earth and breathing all the powers of nature, establishes his real, objective *essential powers* as alien objects by externalization [*Entäusserung*], it is not the *establishing* [*Setzen*] which is subject; it is the subjectivity of *objective* essential powers whose action must therefore be an *objective* one. An objective being acts objectively, and it would not act objectively if objectivity were not an inherent part of its essential nature. It creates and establishes only objects because it is established by objects, because it is fundamentally *nature*. In the act of establishing it therefore does not descend from its 'pure activity' to the *creation of objects*; on the contrary, its *objective* product simply confirms its *objective* activity, its activity as the activity of an objective, natural being.

Here we see how consistent naturalism or humanism differs both from idealism and materialism and is at the same time their unifying truth. We also see that only naturalism is capable of comprehending the process of world history.

*Man* is directly a *natural being*. As a natural being and as a living natural being he is on the one hand equipped with *natural powers*, with *vital powers*, and is an *active* natural being; these powers exist in him as dispositions and capacities, as *drives*. On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is a *suffering*, conditioned and limited being, like animals and plants. That is to say, the *objects* of his drives exist outside him as *objects* independent of him; but these objects are objects of his *need*, essential objects, indispensable to the exercise and confirmation of his essential powers. To say that man is a *corporeal*, living, real, sensuous, objective being with natural powers means that he

has *real, sensuous objects* as the object of his being and of his vital expression, or that he can only *express* his life in real, sensuous objects. To *be* objective, natural and sensuous and to have object, nature and sense outside oneself, or to be oneself object, nature and sense for a third person is one and the same thing. *Hunger* is a natural *need*; it therefore requires a *nature* and an *object* outside itself in order to satisfy and still itself. Hunger is the acknowledged need of my body for an *object* which exists outside itself and which is indispensable to its integration and to the expression of its essential nature. The sun is an *object* for the plant, an indispensable object which confirms its life, just as the plant is an object for the sun, an *expression* of its life-awakening power and its *objective* essential power.

A being which does not have its nature outside itself is not a natural being and plays no part in the system of nature. A being which has no object outside itself is not an objective being. A being which is not itself an object for a third being has no being for its *object*, i.e. it has no objective relationships and its existence is not objective.

A non-objective being is a *non-being*.

Imagine a being which is neither an object itself nor has an object. In the first place, such a being would be the *only* being; no other being would exist outside it; it would exist in a condition of solitude. For as soon as there are objects outside me, as soon as I am not *alone*, I am *another*, a reality *other* than the object outside me. For this third object I am therefore a *reality* other than it, i.e. *its* object. A being which is not the object of another being therefore presupposes that *no* objective being exists. As soon as I have an object, this object has me for its object. But a non-objective being is an unreal, non-sensuous, merely thought, i.e. merely conceived being, a being of abstraction. To be *sensuous*, i.e. to be real, is to be an object of sense, a *sensuous* object, and thus to have sensuous objects outside oneself, objects of one's sense perception. To be sensuous is to *suffer* (to be subjected to the actions of another).

Man as an objective sensuous being is therefore a *suffering* being, and because he feels his suffering [*Leiden*], he is a *passionate* [*leidenschaftliches*] being. Passion is man's essential power vigorously striving to attain its object.

But man is not only a natural being; he is a *human* natural being; i.e. he is a being for himself and hence a *species-being*, as which he must confirm and realize himself both in his being and in his knowing. Consequently, *human* objects are not natural objects as they immediately present themselves, nor is *human* sense, in its immediate and objective existence, *human* sensibility and human objectivity. Neither objective nor subjective nature is immediately present in a form adequate to the *human* being. And as everything natural must *come into being*, so man also has his process of origin in *history*. But for him history is a conscious process,

and hence one which consciously supersedes itself. History is the true natural history of man. (We shall return to this later.)

Third, since this establishing of thingness is itself only an appearance, an act which contradicts the nature of pure activity, it must be superseded once again and thingness must be denied.

*ad* (3), (4), (5), (6).

(3) This alienation of consciousness has not only a *negative* but also a *positive* significance, and (4) it has this positive significance not only *for us* or in itself, but for consciousness itself.

(5) *For self-consciousness* the negative of the object or its own supersession of itself has a *positive* significance – or self-consciousness *knows* the nullity of the object – in that self-consciousness alienates *itself*, for in this alienation it *knows* itself as object or, for the sake of the indivisible unity of *being-for-itself*, the object as itself. (6) On the other hand the other moment is also present in the process, namely, that self-consciousness has superseded and taken back into itself this alienation and objectivity, and is therefore *at home* in its *other-being as such*.

To recapitulate. The appropriation of estranged objective being or the supersession of objectivity in the form of *estrangement* – which must proceed from indifferent otherness to real, hostile estrangement – principally means for Hegel the supersession of *objectivity*, since it is not the *particular* character of the object but its *objective* character which constitutes the offence and the estrangement as far as self-consciousness is concerned. The object is therefore negative, self-superseding, a *nullity*. This nullity of the object has not only a negative but also a *positive* significance for consciousness, for it is precisely the *self-confirmation* of its non-objectivity and *abstraction*. For *consciousness itself* the nullity of the object therefore has a positive significance because it *knows* this nullity, the objective being, as its *self-alienation*; because it knows that this nullity exists only as a result of its own self-alienation . . .

The way in which consciousness is, and in which something is for it, is *knowing*. Knowing is the only act. Hence something comes to exist for consciousness in so far as it *knows* that *something*. Knowing is its only objective relationship. It knows the nullity of the object, i.e. that the object is not distinct from it, the non-existence of the object for it, in that it knows the object as its own *self-alienation*; that is, it knows itself – i.e. it knows knowing, considered as an object – in that the object is only the *appearance* of an object, an illusion, which in essence is nothing more than knowing itself which has confronted itself with itself and hence with a *nullity*, a something which has *no* objectivity outside knowing. Knowing knows that when it relates itself to an object it is only *outside* itself, alienates itself; that it only *appears* to itself as an object, or rather, that what appears to it as an object is only itself.

On the other hand, says Hegel, this other moment is also present in

the process, namely, that self-consciousness has superseded and taken back into itself this alienation and objectivity, and is therefore *at home* in its *other-being as such*.

This discussion is a compendium of all the illusions of speculation.

*Firstly*, consciousness – self-consciousness – is *at home* in its *other-being as such*. It is therefore, if we here abstract from Hegel's abstraction and talk instead of self-consciousness, of the self-consciousness of man, *at home in its other-being as such*. This implies, for one thing, that consciousness – knowing as knowing, thinking as thinking – claims to be the direct *opposite* of itself, claims to be the sensuous world, reality, life – thought over-reaching itself in thought (Feuerbach).<sup>11</sup> This aspect is present in so far as consciousness as mere consciousness is offended not by estranged objectivity but by *objectivity as such*.

Secondly, it implies that self-conscious man, in so far as he has acknowledged and superseded the spiritual world, or the general spiritual existence of his world, as self-alienation, goes on to reaffirm it in this alienated form and presents it as his true existence, restores it and claims to be *at home in his other-being as such*. Thus, for example, having superseded religion and recognized it as a product of self-alienation, he still finds himself confirmed in *religion as religion*. Here is the root of Hegel's *false* positivism or of his merely *apparent* criticism; it is what Feuerbach calls the positing, negating and re-establishing of religion or theology, but it needs to be conceived in a more general way. So reason is at home in unreason as unreason. Man, who has realized that in law, politics etc. he leads an alienated life, leads his true human life in this alienated life as such. Self-affirmation, self-confirmation in *contradiction* with itself and with the knowledge and the nature of the object is therefore true *knowledge* and true *life*.

Therefore there can no longer be any question about a compromise on Hegel's part with religion, the state etc., since this untruth is the untruth of his principle.

If I *know* religion as *alienated* human self-consciousness, then what I know in it as religion is not my self-consciousness but my alienated self-consciousness confirmed in it. Thus I know that the self-consciousness which belongs to the essence of my own self is confirmed not in *religion* but in the *destruction* and *supersession* of religion.

In Hegel, therefore, the negation of the negation is not the confirmation of true being through the negation of apparent being. It is the confirmation of apparent being or self-estranged being in its negation, or the negation of this apparent being as an objective being residing outside man and independent of him and its transformation into the subject.

*The act of superseding* therefore plays a special role in which negation and preservation (affirmation) are brought together.

Thus, for example, in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, *private right* super-

seded equals *morality*, morality superseded equals *family*, family superseded equals *civil society*, civil society superseded equals *state* and state superseded equals *world history*. In *reality* private right, morality, family, civil society, state etc. continue to exist, but have become *moments* and modes of human existence which are meaningless in isolation but which mutually dissolve and engender one another. They are *moments of movement*.

In their real existence this character of *mobility* is hidden. It first appears, is first revealed, in thought and in philosophy. Hence my true religious existence is my existence in the *philosophy of religion*, my true political existence is my existence in the *philosophy of right*, my true natural existence is my existence in the *philosophy of nature*, my true artistic existence is my existence in the *philosophy of art* and my true *human* existence is my *existence in philosophy*. Similarly, the true existence of religion, state, nature and art is the *philosophy* of religion, nature, the state and art. But if the philosophy of religion etc. is for me the true existence of religion, then I am truly religious only as a *philosopher of religion*, and I therefore deny *real* religiosity and the really *religious* man. But at the same time I *confirm* them, partly in my own existence or in the alien existence which I oppose to them – for this is merely their *philosophical* expression – and partly in their particular and original form, for I regard them as merely *apparent* other-being, as allegories, forms of their own true existence concealed under sensuous mantles, i.e. forms of my *philosophical* existence.

Similarly, *quality* superseded equals *quantity*, quantity superseded equals *measure*, measure superseded equals *essence*, essence superseded equals *appearance*, appearance superseded equals *reality*, reality superseded equals the *concept*, the concept superseded equals *objectivity*, objectivity superseded equals the *absolute idea*, the absolute idea superseded equals *nature*, nature superseded equals *subjective* spirit, subjective spirit superseded equals *ethical* objective spirit, ethical spirit superseded equals *art*, art superseded equals *religion*, religion superseded equals *absolute knowledge*.

On the one hand this act of superseding is the act of superseding an entity of thought; thus, private property as *thought* is superseded in the *thought* of morality. And because thought imagines itself to be the direct opposite of itself, i.e. *sensuous reality*, and therefore regards its own activity as *sensuous*, *real* activity, this supersession in thought, which leaves its object in existence in reality, thinks it has actually overcome it. On the other hand, since the object has now become a moment of thought for the thought which is doing the superseding, it is regarded in its real existence as a confirmation of thought, of self-consciousness, of abstraction.

From one aspect the existence which Hegel *supersedes* in philosophy

is therefore not *real* religion, state, nature, but religion already in the form of an object of knowledge, i.e. *dogmatics*; hence also *jurisprudence*, *political science* and *natural science*. From this aspect he therefore stands in opposition both to the *actual* being and to the immediate non-philosophical *science* or non-philosophical *concepts* of this being. He therefore contradicts their current conceptions.

From the other aspect the man who is religious etc. can find his final confirmation in Hegel.

We should now examine the *positive* moments of the Hegelian dialectic, within the determining limits of estrangement.

(a) *The act of superseding* as an objective movement which *reabsorbs* alienation into itself. This is the insight, expressed within estrangement, into the *appropriation* of objective being through the supersession of its alienation; it is the estranged insight into the *real objectification* of man, into the real appropriation of his objective being through the destruction of the *estranged* character of the objective world, through the supersession of its estranged mode of existence, just as atheism as the supersession of God is the emergence of theoretical humanism, and communism as the supersession of private property is the vindication of real human life as man's property, the emergence of practical humanism. Atheism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of religion; communism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of private property. Only when we have superseded this mediation – which is, however, a necessary precondition – will *positive* humanism, positively originating in itself, come into being.

But atheism and communism are no flight, no abstraction, no loss of the objective world created by man or of his essential powers projected into objectivity, no impoverished regression to unnatural, primitive simplicity. They are rather the first real emergence, the realization become real for man, of his essence as something real.

Therefore, in grasping the *positive* significance of the negation which has reference to itself, even if once again in estranged form, Hegel grasps man's self-estrangement, alienation of being, loss of objectivity and loss of reality as self-discovery, expression of being, objectification and realization. In short, he sees labour – within abstraction – as man's *act of self-creation* and man's relation to himself as an alien being and the manifestation of himself as an alien being as the emergence of *species-consciousness* and *species-life*.

(b) But in Hegel, apart from or rather as a consequence of the inversion we have already described, this act appears, first, to be *merely formal* because it is abstract and because human nature itself is seen only as *abstract thinking being*, as self-consciousness.

And secondly, because the conception is *formal* and *abstract*, the supersession of alienation becomes a confirmation of alienation. In other

words, Hegel sees this movement of *self-creation* and *self-objectification* in the form of *self-alienation* and *self-estrangement* as the *absolute* and hence the final *expression of human life* which has itself as its aim, is at rest in itself and has attained its own essential nature.

This movement in its abstract form as dialectic is therefore regarded as *truly human life*. And since it is still an abstraction, an estrangement of human life, it is regarded as a *divine process*, but as the divine process of man. It is man's abstract, pure, absolute being (as distinct from himself) which itself passes through this process.

Thirdly, this process must have a bearer, a subject; but the subject comes into being only as the result; this result, the subject knowing itself as absolute self-consciousness, is therefore *God, absolute spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting idea*. Real man and real nature become mere predicates, symbols of this hidden, unreal man and this unreal nature. Subject and predicate therefore stand in a relation of absolute inversion to one another; a *mystical, subject-object* or *subjectivity encroaching upon the object*, the *absolute subject* as a *process*, as a *subject* which *alienates* itself and returns to itself from alienation, while at the same time reabsorbing this alienation, and the subject as this process; pure, *ceaseless* revolving within itself.

*First, the formal and abstract* conception of man's act of self-creation or self-objectification.

Because Hegel equates man with self-consciousness, the estranged object, the estranged essential reality of man is nothing but consciousness, nothing but the thought of estrangement, its *abstract* and hence hollow and unreal expression, *negation*. The supersession of alienation is therefore likewise nothing but an abstract, hollow supersession of that hollow abstraction, the *negation of the negation*. The inexhaustible, vital, sensuous, concrete activity of self-objectification is therefore reduced to its mere abstraction, *absolute negativity*, an abstraction which is then given permanent form as such and conceived as independent activity, as activity itself. Since this so-called negativity is nothing more than the *abstract, empty* form of that real living act, its content can only be a *formal* content, created by abstraction from all content. Consequently there are general, abstract *forms of abstraction* which fit every content and are therefore indifferent to all content; forms of thought and logical categories torn away from *real* mind and *real* nature. (We shall expound the *logical* content of absolute negativity later.)

Hegel's positive achievement in his speculative logic is to present *determinate concepts*, the universal *fixed thought-forms* in their independence of nature and mind, as a necessary result of the universal estrangement of human existence, and thus also of human thought, and to comprehend them as moments in the process of abstraction. For example, *being* superseded is essence, essence superseded is the concept, the concept



superseded is . . . the absolute idea. But what is the absolute idea? It is compelled to supersede its own self again, if it does not wish to go through the whole act of abstraction once more from the beginning and to reconcile itself to being a totality of abstractions or a self-comprehending abstraction. But the abstraction which comprehends itself as abstraction knows itself to be nothing; it must relinquish itself, the abstraction, and so arrives at something which is its exact opposite, *nature*. Hence the whole of the *Logic* is proof of the fact that abstract thought is nothing for itself, that the absolute idea is nothing for itself and that only *nature* is something.

The absolute idea, the abstract idea which '*considered from the aspect of its unity with itself is intuition [Anschauung]*',<sup>12</sup> and which 'in its own absolute truth *resolves* to let the moment of its particularity or of initial determination and other-being, the *immediate idea*, as its reflection, *issue freely from itself as nature*',<sup>13</sup> this whole idea, which conducts itself in such a strange and baroque fashion, and which has caused the Hegelians such terrible headaches, is purely and simply *abstraction*, i.e. the abstract thinker; abstraction which, taught by experience and enlightened as to its own truth, resolves under various conditions – themselves false and still abstract – to *relinquish itself* and to establish its other-being, the particular, the determinate, in place of its self-pervasion [*Beisichsein*], non-being, universality and indeterminateness; to let *nature*, which it concealed within itself as a mere abstraction, as a thing of thought, *issue freely from itself*, i.e. to abandon abstraction and to take a look at nature, which exists *free* from abstraction. The abstract idea, which directly becomes *intuition*, is quite simply nothing more than abstract thought which relinquishes itself and decides to engage in *intuiting*. This entire transition from logic to philosophy of nature is nothing more than the transition – so difficult for the abstract thinker to effect, and hence described by him in such a bizarre manner – from *abstracting* to *intuiting*. The *mystical* feeling which drives the philosopher from abstract thinking to intuition is *boredom*, the longing for a content.

The man estranged from himself is also the thinker estranged from his *essence*, i.e. from his natural and human essence. His thoughts are therefore fixed phantoms existing outside nature and man. In his *Logic* Hegel has locked up all these phantoms, conceiving each of them first as negation, i.e. as *alienation* of *human* thought, and second, as negation of the negation, i.e. as supersession of this alienation, as a *real* expression of human thought. But since this negation of the negation is itself still trapped in estrangement, what this amounts to is in part the restoration of these fixed phantoms in their estrangement and in part a failure to move beyond the final stage, the stage of self-reference in alienation, which is the true existence of these phantoms.<sup>14</sup> In so far as this abstraction apprehends itself and experiences an infinite boredom with itself, we

find in Hegel an abandonment of abstract thought which moves solely within thought, which has no eyes, teeth, ears, anything, and a resolve to recognise *nature* as being and to go over to intuition.

But *nature* too, taken abstractly, for itself, and fixed in its separation from man, is *nothing* for man. It goes without saying that the abstract thinker who decides on intuition, intuits nature abstractly. Just as nature lay enclosed in the thinker in a shape which even to him was shrouded and mysterious, as an absolute idea, a thing of thought, so what he allowed to come forth from himself was simply this *abstract nature*, nature as a thing of thought – but with the significance now of being the other-being of thought, real, intuited nature as distinct from abstract thought. Or, to put it in human terms, the abstract thinker discovers from intuiting nature that the entities which he imagined he was creating out of nothing, out of pure abstraction, in a divine dialectic, as the pure products of the labour of thought living and moving within itself and never looking out into reality, are nothing more than *abstractions* from *natural forms*. The whole of nature only repeats to him in a sensuous, external form the abstractions of logic. He *analyses* nature and these abstractions again. His intuiting of nature is therefore only the act of confirmation of his abstraction from the intuition of nature, a conscious reenactment of the process by which he produced this abstraction. Thus, for example, Time is equated with Negativity referred to itself.<sup>15</sup> In the natural form, superseded Movement as Matter corresponds to superseded Becoming as Being. Light is the *natural* form of *Reflection-in-itself*. Body as *Moon* and *Comet* is the *natural* form of the *antithesis* which, according to the *Logic*, is the *positive grounded upon itself* and the *negative grounded upon itself*. The Earth is the *natural* form of the logical *ground*, as the negative unity of the antithesis etc.

*Nature as nature*, i.e. in so far as it is sensuously distinct from the secret sense hidden within it, nature separated and distinct from these abstractions is *nothing*, a *nothing proving itself to be nothing*; it is *devoid of sense*, or only has the sense of an externality to be superseded.

'In the finite-teleological view is to be found the correct premise that nature does not contain the absolute end within itself.'<sup>16</sup>

Its end is the confirmation of abstraction.

'Nature has revealed itself as the idea in the *form of other-being*. Since the *idea* in this form is the negative of itself or *external to itself*, nature is not only external relative to this idea, but *externality* constitutes the form in which it exists as nature.'<sup>17</sup>

*Externality* here should not be understood as *self-externalizing sensuousness* accessible to light and to sensuous man. It is to be taken in the sense of alienation, a flaw, a weakness, something which ought not to be. For that which is true is still the idea. Nature is only the *form* of its *other-being*. And since abstract thought is the *essence*, that which is

external to it is in essence something merely *external*. The abstract thinker recognizes at the same time that *sensuousness, externality*, in contrast to thought which moves and lives *within itself*, is the essence of nature. But at the same time he expresses this antithesis in such a way that this *externality of nature*, its *antithesis* to thought, is its *defect* and that in so far as it is distinct from abstraction it is a defective being. A being which is defective not only for me, not only in my eyes, but in itself has something outside itself which it lacks. That is to say, its essence is something other than itself. For the abstract thinker nature must therefore supersede itself, since it is already posited by him as a potentially *super-seded* being.

'For us, mind has nature as its *premise*, since it is nature's *truth* and therefore its *absolute primus*. In this truth nature has *disappeared*, and mind has yielded as the idea which has attained being-for-itself, whose *object* as well as *subject* is *the concept*. This identity is *absolute negativity*, for whereas in nature the concept has its perfect external objectivity, in this its alienation has been superseded and the concept has become identical with itself. It is this identity only in that it is a return from nature.<sup>18</sup>

'*Revelation*, as the *abstract idea*, is unmediated transition to, the *coming-to-be* of, nature; as the revelation of the mind which is free it is the *establishing* of nature as *its own world*; an establishing which, as reflection, is at the same time a *presupposing* of the world as independently existing nature. Revelation in its concept is the creation of nature as the mind's being, in which it procures the affirmation and truth of its freedom.' 'The *absolute is mind*: this is the highest definition of the absolute.'<sup>19</sup>

## Notes

1 Bruno Bauer, *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker*, Vols. 1-2, Leipzig, 1841; Vol. 3, Brunswick, 1842.

2 Bruno Bauer, *Das entdeckte Christentum. Eine Erinnerung an das achtzehnte Jahrhundert und ein Beitrag zur Krisis des neunzehnten*, Zürich and Winterthur, 1843.

3 *ibid.*, p. 113.

4 *ibid.*, pp. 114f.

5 Bauer, *Die gute Sache der Freiheit und meine eigene Angelegenheit*, Zürich and Winterthur, 1842, pp. 193ff.

6 Arnold Ruge (ed.), *Anekdoten zur neuesten deutschen Philosophie und Publizistik*, Zürich and Winterthur, 1843, Vol. 2, p. 62. Ludwig Feuerbach, 'Vorläufige Thesen zur Reformation der Philosophie'.

7 Ludwig Feuerbach, *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft*, Zürich and Winterthur, 1843.

8 *ibid.*, paras. 29 and 30.

9 What follows are the chapter and section headings of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*.

10 These eight points are taken almost word for word from the chapter 'Absolute knowledge' of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*.

11. In his *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* (§30) Feuerbach writes: 'Hegel is a thinker who *over-reaches* himself in thought.'

12. G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften in Grundrisse*, 3rd edn, Heidelberg, 1830, p. 222.

13. *ibid.*

14. That is, Hegel substitutes the act of abstraction revolving within itself for these fixed abstractions; in so doing he has the merit, first of all, of having revealed the source of all these inappropriate concepts which originally belonged to separate philosophers, of having combined them and of having created as the object of criticism the exhaustive range of abstraction rather than one particular abstraction. We shall later see why Hegel separates thought from the *subject*; but it is already clear that if man is not human, then the expression of his essential nature cannot be human, and therefore that thought itself could not be conceived as an expression of man's being, of man as a human and natural subject, with eyes, ears, etc., living in society, in the world and in nature. (Marx's note.)

15. Hegel, *Encyclopädie*, p. 225.

16. *ibid.*

17. *ibid.*, p. 227

18. *ibid.*, p. 392.

19. *ibid.*, p. 393.

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**Extract from *The Logical Question in Hegel's System* (1843)**

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Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg

When in logic a judgment is passed on Hegel's system as a system, there gathers round it, as a centre, what is today a great philosophic interest. The undersigned therefore, although himself a party in this case, will endeavour to give a short notice of the position of matters in the *logical question* since wishing, by that means, to bespeak for the pending investigation a greater interest than it has heretofore found.

There never yet was a system in which method and result, the principle of form and the origin of the thing were so closely united as in Hegel's. His 'Dialectic of Pure Thought' attempts to create and to form the whole content. For with him the self-movement of self-related thought is, at the same time, the self-creation of Being. While Thought presses on from its unity to antitheses, and reconciles these antitheses in a new idea, thence going through, again and again, the same procedure, in these stages of the idea it is held to determine itself into so many grades of Being.

Any one who has studied Hegel knows that this dialectic method with thesis, antithesis and solution – the dialectic method, with the metamorphosis of its negativity – imparts the common stamp to all his writings, and forms the imposing architecture of his entire system. It is the bond which binds all the thoughts; it is the motive which, as in a Gothic building, repeats in the parts the type of the whole, and in the whole the type of the parts. Its consistent carrying out of it into all the corners of the universe, the indefatigable execution, here in yielding, there in recalcitrant material, shows an energy of formation which hardly has its equal. With Hegel the dialectic method is like the law of a crystallization, in which all his ideas uniformly crystallize, and it shows a returning symmetry of the thought become solid, and the original movement of the fluid formation. The surprising unity has attracted large numbers of minds, and fettered them; and that which seems stiff and cold in this system to the person entering, many are willing to put up with, for the

purpose of having a share in this great edifice, and particularly of enjoying the advantages which the great out-buildings afford. Whoever has once seen with his mind's eye the greatness and labour of this building, which has been erected from one thought, will not be ready to blame until the insight which he has obtained forces him to call the attention of the crowd that is pouring in to the unstable foundations.

When Truth is going to burst a barrier, it is vain to try to dam it up with false admiration.

We know it well. Whoever contends against Hegel's system contends against the closest phalanx of thoughts; and we would rather place our own opinions and thoughts in the same lines and draw strength from them than waste our strength on them, *were we able*. Whoever, then, consciously undertakes the contest is assuredly moved by something different from the petty reasons which opponents so readily ascribe to each other when they do not wish to risk a fair argument. We ask for ourselves nothing else but the condition of all science – *free investigation of the subject* – and that thing as the authority which the cognitive spirit alone recognizes.

The principal question in the system is the *logical* question, since the dialectic method of pure thinking is to be the absolute one. Hegel himself declares it to be the *only true* method of philosophic science since it is 'the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content' (*Logic*, 1833, I, pp. 41, 42). 'The dialectic constitutes', says Hegel in another place (*Encyclopaedia*, 4th edn, § 81), 'the moving soul of scientific progress, and is the principle by means of which alone immanent connection and necessity come into the content of science.' 'As the dialectic in general', he says in a note, 'is actually the principle of all movement, of all life, and of all action, so also is the dialectic the soul of *all true* scientific cognition.' 'The content of all reason is *nothing else* but the determination which comprehensive thought develops *from itself*' (*Encyclopaedia*, § 468, cf. § 574). 'In unity to know the antithesis, and in antithesis to know the unity, is the *absolute knowledge*; and science is this – to know this unity in its entire development *through itself*.' Thus closes the 'History of Philosophy', which sees in Hegel's system the completed and comprehensive truth of all former ones (*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 683).

On the authority of such and similar passages the dialectic method of pure thought is *exclusively* the only truly scientific method, and also the creator of the form, since it produces the immanent and necessary connection as the creator of the content, because thought, which through it is comprehensive thought, has developed *from itself* the determination of the contents.

And the philosophical act says more than such expressions say. Hegel appeals to the fact (*Logic*, I, p. 41) that he set up an example of this

method first in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and later in the case of other concrete objects and parts of philosophy. The dialectic of pure thought shows its omnipotence first in Logic, because here it breathes in the 'pure ether' of spirit and weaves the ideas from unresisting matter, or, more properly, without matter. The Logic was the scientific foundation of the dialectic method, and all the right of application flowed from the plenitude of the Logic. If the Logic runs out into the idea, which is the one totality, complete in itself, nature-philosophy begins where the idea concludes to throw itself into otherness, and as nature, to free itself from itself. The process of the dialectic begins here anew, and it goes from the most external element of space and time, and more and more into itself, and continually produces richer and deeper thoughts, until the idea grasps itself in the self-conscious human spirit. Therefore one and the same dialectic is made to conquer nature and spirit, the soul and the history of the world. But nowhere in its course does the dialectic become freer, or return more to its proper province, than in the philosophy of religion, which stands in complete dependence upon the Logic. A theory like the widespread one that the thinking human mind is what makes the hitherto unconscious god conscious of himself could have arisen only under the influence of a logical view according to which comprehensive thought conceives the content from itself, receives no rational ready-made content from without, but produces the determinations of Being from itself; it could have arisen only under the influence of a logical influence at whose foundation lies the entire presupposition that human thought, when man thinks *purely*, is as creative as divine thought, and in so far is the divine thought itself. Yet we do not indeed understand what the conception of God at all means and what God signifies to man, since it is only man who makes him conscious of himself, since God, though not like an idol, the work of hands, before which the same hands that made it are folded in adoration, is, after all, a product of thought, which can hardly be adored and worshipped by the same thought which woke it from its sleep, and enabled it to pass from blind inertness to consciousness.

Yet Hegel's Logic maintained itself and appeared firmly based in itself. For all time it was thought it had proved the dialectic method to be the only philosophical one which through its own activity would refute all objections. In the same degree as formal logic failed to solve the problem of comprehending cognition, an indirect proof was seen for the truth of the speculative dialectic. Persons were astonished at the newly discovered creative power of thought. In Hegel's Logic the principle seemed to verify itself in vast regions of human knowledge. Its very difficulty became a voucher of a depth which was not accessible to all. Many parts of the sciences received a surprising light, and the saying was applied to Hegel's Logic which Socrates is said to have used of Heraclitus' dark, but pro-

found work: 'What I have understood in the book is excellent; so, therefore, I think is also that which I have not understood; but it requires a Delian swimmer not to sink in it.' The bolder thought they possessed this mental swimming-faculty; the more timid mistrusted rather themselves than the much-promising subject. Thus gradually the authority of Hegel's Logic grew, and persons often expressed themselves to the effect that only the weak-minded and the slothful-minded, who feared and shunned the dialectic labour of thought, doubted Hegel's philosophy. It was considered the initiation into the secret's of the thinking world of spirit. The dialectic procedure was the key to God and the world – the universal method; it was the magic wand of truth, with which the thinking mind conjured up the hidden spirits of things. Some managed it with skilful hands and with the fantastic ecstasy of a mysterious magician; others managed it more clumsily, but with the entire fundamental science of the new art.

It became a dogma of the later philosophy that the dialectic procedure was the *absolute* method; and to this great discovery, the greatest which seemed ever to have been made in the region of philosophy, persons also clung whom the result did not satisfy.

Still the objections continued. Results turned themselves against the new dialectic principle, whereas every new idea arising in science must carry itself through and confirm itself by results. If the dialectic method were the universal method, it must extend to the individual sciences and scientific methods. Hegel himself had challenged applications of it, in order to raise the rational content to the only rational form, and to organize science in its immanent connection. With great promise such attempts were undertaken in the field of universal history, of grammar, of the history of philosophy etc. But the more concrete the matter, and the more special the case, the more dangerous became the logical experiment. For while the general allows itself to be drawn into the indefinite, and the indefinite suits itself more easily to the formative power of the foreign spirit, the particular exercises a stricter control, in proportion to the closeness of observation possible in it. The idea, which formerly strode away haughtily over the particular, was now forced to come to an agreement with the particular. None of these attempts met with general acceptance; rather were they all repelled by the sciences as strange intruders. Such abortive applications rendered the exclusive method doubtful.

Another comprehensive fact contributed to the same result. Two important men worked, in a series of writings and periodicals, *in favour* of Hegel's dialectic method, *against* Hegel's result. 'The truth in form and the falsehood in matter of the philosophy of Hegel', wrote Weisse in the introduction to his *Metaphysics*, 'the sterling excellence of its methods, and the cheerless baldness of its results force themselves with



equal evidence upon my mind.' If originally the essence and value of the dialectic method were supposed to lie in the fact that in the determination of its self-acting form it produced the truth of the content, if formerly the artistic act of speculation was valued, which penetrated both the form and the content, if hitherto the dialectic method had been represented as the eternal birth of essence into form, and form into essence, the now-exposed disagreement seemed to testify against the principle. It appeared incredible that the inventor himself should have misunderstood his own invention; it seemed incredible that the inventor should play his own instrument so falsely. All who knew Hegel's energy doubted rather of the invention than of the inventor, if they could not maintain both. People became doubtful.

Others, in a different manner, became unfaithful to the original thought. The dialectic had moved essentially in a trinity, and had seen in this very closed trinity the security for its self-completing totality. By an application to the history of Philosophy, the dialectic seemed to surrender this trinity, and only to maintain the thought that, in the immanent movement of negativity, it led over from the one-sidedness and the limitations of the system to the positive content of another. While therein only necessity was sought, the dialectic sank into the indefinite, and, with the triadic law, the survey of the necessary *whole* was lost. The strong band of the dialectic had now become more lax. After such an attack on the dialectic method, it was asked how far it had remained unchanged.

In later times, the dialectic was here and there more closely attacked. Dr D. F. Strauss essentially takes the ground of Hegel's philosophy, and we owe to his controversial writings a deeper insight into the connection of Hegel's religious philosophy with the whole dialectic. In several places he appeals to Hegel's 'profound categories', which are the result of the dialectic process. But he himself does not darken his clear investigation by allowing his subject to be interfered with by the speculative dialectic of pure thought. In his *Glaubenslehre*, his dialectic goes hand in hand with the antithesis which, in the lapse of centuries, science has produced, and his great skill consists in perceiving nicely these antitheses, in representing them clearly, and in bringing them to an energetic combat. Where his own philosophic view appears, one can see that it was possible only on the basis of Hegel's dialectic method; everywhere it shows its origin and workshop. But the art of this workshop remains in the work itself, as the deep-hidden power, which is everywhere presupposed as self-evident, but is nowhere brought forward for treatment; it is, as it were, *before* the work, but not *in* the work. Strauss did not apply the dialectic method in Hegel's speculative sense, as it was in the above-mentioned abortive trial, but rather put it out of use. The dialectic of his work is a dialectic which lets itself down from the construction of the speculative thought into the arena of the Given – the dialectic of parties, but not

the dialectic of pure conception. Hegel's logic here does not supply the method; it is itself a moment, and one of the last moments in the process of the object. It has produced, along with it, its cancellation. From it arises the whole world-view, before whose apparent clearness the solid-seeming fogs of creed-doctrines are scattered, without even reflecting a rainbow in their flight. The annihilating arguments are partly taken from Hegel's logic, and what yet remains standing in the downfall stands on their foundation. Therefore the recognition of the critical results depends essentially on the recognition of Hegel's logic. Yet the dialectic which is employed in the work is dialectic only in the broader sense; a freer dialectic, the presentation of an historical process, in which the dogmas crush and wear themselves away against the progress of science and of philosophy, but not that speculative dialectic by means of which Hegel rather desired to preserve and to animate it. It is a dialectic For and Against, which, with every cancelled one-sidedness, cancels also a piece of the matter, a dialectic which, reared and strengthened in the absolute method, rather turns itself against it than works in its spirit.

Persons went still further. While with Strauss, reverence for the great system, whose soul the dialectic method is, peers forth in the background of the thoughts, to others who wished to perform great deeds in Hegel's name the uphill dialectic seemed to be an idle piece of profundity, or a troublesome fetter to free ideas. The work of the categories was put away. It was praised wherever anyone sought a scientific nimbus; it was thrown away wherever it threatened to punish arbitrariness with its laws. Here and there, for the sake of philosophical politeness, a few bows were made before the absolute method as the dialectic of the speculative world-spirit, or because people liked to have a foreign, logical mystery behind their backs, in order not to appear shallow themselves. At times this feeling was uttered openly. People reprehended, for instance, as a fault in such a man as the late Gans what had until then been considered in its way as a philosophic recommendation: they blamed his Old-Hegelian self-sufficiency, in that he liked to allow the whole weight of the logical system to be felt. The system, it was said, proves itself only in its connection, and the idea is everywhere merely this connection. Persons spoke very wittily, aiming at the Logic, of the grand Olympic height, of the extramundane position of absolute rotundity (*Deutsche Jahrbücher* (June 1841)). But with such irony directed at the connection of the idea, irony was directed at the whole of Hegel's system, which, after all, is nothing more than the dialectic explication of the connection immanent in the idea.

Thus, after brave wanderings, Hegel's Dialectic Method of Pure Thought and his whole work suffered shipwreck among his own followers.

If one had meant to judge the value of the principle, the essence of the dialectic method, by the results, there was one other astonishing thing. Contrary characters drew from the fountain of pure thought, and

they drew from it contraries. Men full of Christian fervour nourished their enthusiasm for the positive from the comprehensive dialectic; others, full of daring energy, drank from the same spring their enthusiasm for the world-storm of negation. 'Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?' might fairly have been asked in this case. In theology, the dogmas were constructed and demolished by means of the same dialectic. The silent observer concluded, not wrongly, that only from an inner confusion of principle could such contradictory facts possibly flow.

In this manner the dialectic method, which had come forth bold and pungent, had already, in its phenomenon, dulled and blunted itself.

But Hegel's logic remained the firm seat of the dialectic method. Should then a philosophic thought, born for eternity, be judged by the misfortunes of a decade? If it is confident still to conquer such accidents, we must follow it further in its essence.

In Hegel's school there was activity in the most diverse regions of philosophy, to perfect and form it, or to complete and rectify it. But until recently the logic went empty-handed, if we except the labours of Weisse and Fichte, which were set aside as rubbish. Hegel's logic was considered indestructible and beyond improvement; and where a defeat had once been suffered in other regions, a retreat was made to this impregnable fortress. Only in the last few years has there been perceived within the school a movement which threatens to shake the main support of the system, the logic. Two works, which back Hegel's logic, show plainly that even here an inner crisis is impending.

The work of the undersigned, published in the year 1840, entitled *Logical Investigations*, followed the dialectic method throughout its whole course, and judged it not according to any external result or moral consequences, but according to its principles and its entire carrying out, and according to the scientific results of the subject. The greatness of the *attempt* was granted, if the pure idea were, as in the divine intellect, to produce itself creatively and only from itself, if pure thought in one act were to create the form and the content of the world. It was granted that in logic the problem could not be put higher. But, at the same time, a demand was made for the means which should put such a giant plan into operation, and the actual accomplishment was measured by the attempt. Then, in an investigation, which advanced from the general to the particular, the result was obtained that the dialectic method of pure thought was in itself *impossible*.

The points there advanced are essentially the following:

The logic tries to presuppose nothing but pure thought, which possesses no external intuition, no image, but simply itself; but, by creating from itself, produces the conceptions and the determinations of being. It was investigated whether in fact Hegel's logic remains true to this promise,

presupposes nothing, and produces only from pure thought. Then it was plainly apparent that, even in the first step, the principle of all external phenomena was presupposed, the concept of *local* motion. The aid of this form-giving intuition was indeed kept hidden, but it aided mightily; and if it was once admitted, there continually arose from it new sensuous vehicles, without which pure thought would not move from its place. Where pure thought haughtily claims to produce from itself, there this openly despised, yet secretly received principle – there the silently accompanying action of motion reflecting the images in the space of the imagination lends it to the logical forms which it could never have produced from itself. By means of this foreign but hidden service, the productions of pure thought receive a sensuous freshness, without which they would have been less than fleeting shadows. He who is strict enough to hold the presuppositionless dialectic of pure thought to its word, and really attempts to proceed without any presupposition and purely, soon sees that it remains immovable and that its productions are still-born. But since it is impossible for the human mind to accomplish absolutely the required abstraction, and to depart from the first condition of its activity, the condition of the designing fantasy, since it is always present where one has supposed it excluded, there may arise, through its silent cooperation, the *appearance* as if pure thought produced from itself *pure conceptions of being*. But pure thought lives apart from imaginative, impure thought. If it does not receive from the latter its daily bread, it dies irretrievably. The thus designated connection between so-called pure thought and the fundamental activity of all intuition was proved first of all in the beginning of the logic, in the Becoming, and objection was taken to the local motion, on the threshold, as it entered; but it was further shown how it acts a part in the logic without right. It was most apparent where pure thought, according to its own assertion, produced dialectically from itself continuous and discrete, extensive and intensive magnitude, attraction and repulsion, the pressure and impulse of mechanics, and the process of life, without space and time and in the form of eternity. In this and other conceptions, the impure element of the picture, the sensuously formed activity of the secretly intruded movement, was caught in the act. One could not hide behind the statement that pure thought always was declared to be a movement; indeed it had been denominated a movement indefinitely enough, as likewise all activity falls under this comprehensive metaphor: it could not be conceded that the designing movement of fantasy was meant, which is the opposite of the local one; for thereby the logic of pure thought would have been destroyed from its very beginning, and the elements of nature-philosophy, space and time, would have been dragged into logic. With such a concession, the absolute method would have perished in its beginning. A movement in the lump was acknowledged; but when this was so far

brought to a standstill that its nature was discovered, it showed itself to be the opposite of what it had given itself out to be: it was not the movement of pure thought, but the movement of intuition, a geometrical movement which designs forms in the space of the imagination. This local motion appeared as the presupposition of the presuppositionless logic. It was hinted that the consequences of this secret presupposition were immeasurable. The entire wealth of the formative intuition, the clearness of an accompanying picture now came silently, but illegally, into the possession of pure thought. It now had at its disposal an image which it used whenever it stood in need of it, and, according to its principle, threw away whenever it retired into its haughty abstractions. Had ever any method behaved more uncritically than pure thinking?

Furthermore, the *logical* means were investigated which the dialectic applies in order to get from pure being to the idea, from presuppositionless voidness to the fullness of the intellectual world, and to get there in such a manner as to produce from itself the interjacent forms of the conception – as it were the stages of pure thought. As is well known, *negation* and *identity* play a principal part in this. They are purely logical words, and therefore they give to themselves the appearance of a *logical* action, and to everything that originates from them the stamp of a *logical production*.

In the first place, the *Negation* is the inborn impulse which drives pure thinking along from stage to stage. No sooner is a concept produced than it turns over, from its own inner nature, into its negation, and we have before us the problem of thinking a positive and a negative together. This problem is solved by the creation of a mediatory concept which reconciles the two antitheses. Thus the progress of the dialectic is conditioned by the Negation.

The investigation showed that the applied negation cannot be a pure logical negation, the relation of *not-A*, to *A*, but that it must be real opposition in order to produce a Contrary – an Opposition. But since the Contrary does not run off into indefinite contradiction or opposition, into mere unlimited negation, but is on the contrary another Positive, which, concrete and limited in itself, contains the negation of Another [somewhat] only as one relation, it became apparent at once that the real opposition – the negation of the dialectic – was not to be reached in any merely logical way. Not only was this shown in general terms, but the same demonstration was further applied to the most important concepts of the system (for example to repulsion and attraction, to whole and force, to substance and causality, to nature and spirit), and it was proved in the particular cases that the negativity always goes beyond its logical essence, and the opposition does not spring from the pure thought, as is pretended, but from the apprehensive intuition, which arbitrarily con-

denses the indefinite looseness of the logical negation into a positive form, and, in that form, seizes and holds it.

If, now, the antithesis is supposed to be evolved from the thesis by negation, so likewise thesis and antithesis are carried up by *Identity* to a concept which stands above them, and is designated as their truth. The identity, therefore, appears in the result as the real unity, as the force of concretion. If, however, we probe it to the bottom, we find that it is far short of what it professes to be; that it is nothing but the reflection of a relative, logical likeness – an abstraction which bleaches and blots out. *Becoming*, in Hegel's *Logic*, is the first act of identity, Being and Nothing being comprehended under it. Pure Being, we are told, is empty Being – Nothing; and empty Being is pure Being. The one is what the other is. The two are identical, and, thought as such, they are *Becoming*. In spite of this, this identity of the reflection is only a self-annihilating compromise, without a trace of living unity to transform in a real manner Being into Nothing, and Nothing into Being. It is the completed levelling of two concepts, viz. pure Being and empty Being, while it is anything but a case of mutual intus-susception or interpenetration. In such identity, the antitheses blunt each other, instead of bestirring themselves and becoming one as they should do. What is here summarized in the well-known example of dialectic *Becoming* reappears, as the *Investigations* prove, in the most essential concepts of the system, for example where the Finite unites with itself in the Infinite; where the freedom of the concept is conjured out of the necessity of substance; where the idea is defined as the absolute unity of concept and objectivity. The power of unity over the greatest antitheses rests on the identity of such impotent assimilation. The real interpenetration is forced in. Compared with the boldness of the idea of reconciling antitheses with each other, the proof which pure thought has to offer for the fact appears rather infirm. Its truth has its origin in something quite different from any such mere logical act.

Thus the hinges of the system break down.

The investigation showed further that *ad infinitum* procession, a mere indirect proof, was frequently misused in order to obtain a positive creation of an opposite. It turned out, likewise, that the Immediate, which cannot appear in the pure thought as sensuous, is nevertheless tacitly introduced into the sensuous apprehension.

After such results, the internal connection – the glory of the system – could not hold out. Notwithstanding that, this too was subjected to a special investigation. Then, independently of the necessary consequences of the points already made, it became manifest in many other places that the intrinsic connection which asserts the self-development of science from its own most undisputed ground, viz., the concept, in opposition to knowledge derived from without, is merely appearance, bold assertion.

When the determinations of science, in the dialectic and internal contemplation of the concept, had to make a step in advance, instead of doing this unassisted, they betrayed, when examined more closely, the foreign impulse of external experience. What ought to originate from itself is simply borrowed. Anticipations of concepts, and foreign matter, picked up at random, were shown to exist in the most important creations of the dialectic; the former, for example, in Measure, in the Freedom of the Concept, in the Totality of the Unconditioned, in the Transition of the Idea into Nature, already frequently alluded to; the latter, in the logical treatment of Matter, in the logical categories of Mechanism, Chemistry, Life etc. We are thus led to consider the relation of the dialectic method to the material of experience. Hegel had almost asserted, in regard to this, that the dialectic process presupposes the facts of experience, but that it exalts them into the true rational form. Who could have refrained from admiring, with an admiration amounting to astonishment, in Hegel himself – from his *Phenomenology* down to his posthumous *Lectures* – the extreme universality of his empirical knowledge? And no one asserted that Hegel could have meant that the philosopher ought to ‘suck the world out of his finger-ends’. But the question here was not one touching his subjective knowing or his opinions, but one relating to the objective relation of his absolute method; and then it was shown that this method, strictly confined to itself, and advancing by means of borrowed crutches, had, by its very nature, no opening, whether door or window, to let in experience, and because it nevertheless tacitly and stealthily opens a back door to it, it occupies an *uncritical* position to experience, with its indefinite expression regarding presupposition, and is perhaps more uncritical than unspeculative, but careful, empiricism. It is impossible to find a place for experience without making holes in the internal connection of the self-productive Concept.

The speculative method undertook to show that the process whereby the concepts were produced was likewise the process which produced the thing. Thus the dialectic and the genesis of the thing seemed necessarily to coincide. On closer examination, however, it became apparent that the dialectic process in most cases inverts the genesis of the thing, or passes over it without concern, and without touching it. In view of this surprising discrepancy, the advantage which had just been gained had to be abandoned, and refuge to be taken in a distinction which had not originally lain in the plan, that the *eternal* birth of the pure concept was not the temporal development of the becoming thing, and that the two did not necessarily coincide. The dialectic then admitted itself to be, in individual cases, a methodical *hysteron-proteron*.

If, in the dialectic method, the syllogism and its figures came to assume such importance that the dictum was trumpeted abroad, ‘God is a syllogism; the state is a syllogism; the planetary system is a syllogism’ etc.,

on closer examination there turned out to be in this doctrine an obscurity and confusion which distinctly showed themselves in the application. Here, too, in a word, the dialectic topsy-turvy showed itself in the very dictum itself. If we were to construe mental maladies according to the same type – if we were to say, for example, that Pietism unites itself with Mysticism to form Phariseeism, as the Hegelian terminology would express it, we might also say, with equal right, ‘Everything irrational is a syllogism.’ Thus the doctrine has overshot itself.

After such results, neither the leading thought of the dialectic method nor the carrying out of it could be recognized, and the question now came to be, whether openly to abandon the philosophical prejudice of the present, or to refute the charges being brought against the system.

So far, neither one thing nor the other was done. The former was difficult; along with the dialectic method, it would have been necessary to abandon Hegel’s system as a system; for the two are one, just as the critical system and Kant’s system are one. The second looked easier, perhaps, and yet it did not take place. Perhaps silence was meant for a refutation.

Erdmann published his well-thought-out *Outlines of Logic and Metaphysics* in 1841. In certain turns of phrase and remarks, he seemed to have reference to the *Investigations* just mentioned, nay, even in places to yield points to them. But he did not mention this fact, and left it to be guessed by the initiated. Erdmann changes several things in the matter, and almost everything in the expression, which he to some extent managed so dexterously as to take the point off any objection that had been made. But the *Investigations* had attacked the *thing* itself, and could hardly be brought to silence by a change in the mode of expression. Any one who will take the trouble to compare it with his new presentation may satisfy himself on the point. Besides this, it might easily be shown that the altered expressions, where they mean anything at all, imply a change of view, and an alteration in the thing. It would be desirable to see these differences discussed within the school itself, in order to show their magnitude. Erdmann’s *Logic*, although written in the spirit of Hegel, is not altogether Hegel’s old logic.

Treating matters in an opposite spirit, there appeared in 1841 Werder’s *Logic, a Commentary and Supplement to Hegel’s Science of Logic*. It belongs to the idea of a commentary that it shall smooth over difficulties and disentangle intricacies. Up to that time, all philosophical commentaries had been written with this purpose – for example commentaries on Aristotle, for thousands of years. *This* Commentary to Hegel’s *Logic* took no notice of the *Investigations*, directed against it, and probably did not consider the doubts expressed as worth discussion. As for the rest, he invented a new logical category, calling the opponents of the system, ‘the Lord’s heaviest cross’, and those who would not accept the concept



of God set up by the pure thinking, and therefore rejected it, 'God's sorest suffering, a passion to which the history of the Passion is but a shadow'. Still, there were some *innovations* in this Logic too, and, although it had appeared as a supplement, it was rather an *annihilation* of the original, as even the adherents of the system seemed to admit. Particularly remarkable was the correction which appeared at the very beginning. The identity of pure Being and Nothing in the production of Becoming had always excited opposition, and difficulties of various kinds had been found in it. Among other things, people had found it impossible to think the identity of Being and Nothing, because, after all, Nothing appeared to be *less* than pure Being – to be a *minus*; people could not conceive how two empty abstractions – pure Being and pure Nothing – could mutually complement each other, so as to form the concept of *Becoming*. These difficulties were settled by an emendation. It was asserted that Hegel had been wrong in holding the difference between pure Being and Nothing to be inexpressible – a mere opinion. The difference was quite considerable. It was discovered that Nothing is *more* than pure Being, a *plus*; that Nothing is the most comprehensive something. 'In Nothing, Being, of itself, breaks the silence in itself. Nothing is Being's coming to consciousness, the rise of perception in it, its glance into itself, the salient point of its originality. In Nothing the sacred ambiguity of the emptiness of Being discloses itself. That it is nothing else than *Self-Being*, *Being-through-itself*; that it, singly and alone, is *full* of itself – this is its emptiness, this is Nothing. Thus Nothing is Being's knowledge of its fullness, of its repetition from itself, of its free action, of its self-creation; and, stirring itself in itself, in the energy of this Knowing, Being is no longer Being, but Becoming.' 'When I say Nothing, I know more than when I say Being, because it *is* more; because it is Being revealing itself, bursting its husk – because it is *naked* Being, the spirit of Being, Being in Being.' Finally, when the commentary declared the dialectic to be the '*Reverie of Logic*', and treated it as such, pure thinking, as far at least as principle was concerned, became vague thinking. The Hegelian school has thus far allowed this Logic to pass muster, without rejecting or disowning it.

In fact, the great differences which subsist within the school seem all to rest pretty much in the same way as the schisms in the Church used to do; the Church forgot these, when she had to combat with heretics or heathens outside.

Gabler gave a lengthy review of the *Logical Investigations* in the *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* (Oct. 1841), No. 65 sq., Art I. In this, however, he has criticized a result without its premises – the twentieth section, without the nineteen that precede it and form its basis. The dialectical question, in the first place, is not touched upon at all, my understanding of it being merely set aside as an 'incomprehensible misun-

derstanding'. As no harm is done by such assertions, we wait to see the proof of them in the second article; otherwise we might turn the tables and repeat the compliment of 'incomprehensible misunderstanding'. The aim of the criticisms is to show that the *Logical Investigations* know less of God than the dialectic method, which is absolutely and directly the thinking of God. This we willingly acknowledge, if the dialectic method be true; but we had proved that it is false, and therefore really knows nothing. If one, therefore, meant to argue in this way, he could not afford to omit the opposite proof. At all events, until it appears, his assertion has no foundation.

Other critics have taken it for granted that the whole question has been set at rest by this veto of Gabler's. For example, we find in a polemical article: 'The main objection, derived from Hegel's unexplained assumption of movement, is developed in the *Logical Investigations*, and duly weighed by Gabler in a criticism of that work.' The truth is that in that criticism not a word is said about such objections, and we cannot say that we at all admire the spirit of such tactics. No explanation, such as the above words would imply as having been made, was intended by Gabler, who, at the end of his criticism, openly states that he will deal with the heavy charges brought against Hegel's philosophy in a second article.

In support of the dialectic method, which thinks the thought of God, reference is repeatedly made to the Christian Logos (cf. *inter al.* Gabler's Criticism, p. 570). We take the reference to mean this: through him and for him all is created, and he is before all, and all exists in him. If, then, he be the head of the body – that is of the Church – he belongs to us, and we may comprehend him in pure thought. This conclusion will hardly be permitted to anyone who understands the Christian Logos in the sense demanded by the entire context. The same Logos that in the beginning was God – the world-creating Logos – redeems men from the dominion of darkness and sin. It is this function that is the inheritance of the Church; but from this to attempt to authenticate, by a sort of Christian testimony, the act of the pure idea, which produces the world-creating Logos out of itself, is something quite new, and hardly coincides with the notion of the Apostle Paul, who openly says of the Church that 'now we know but *in part*', and 'behold but as through a glass darkly'. If from words like these anyone were to conclude that the Christian view of the Universe was universal scepticism, he would be as far from the truth as he who should cite the Christian Logos in authentication of the standpoint of the speculative method. Such confusion of thought only tends to warp unbiassed investigation.

Reference has been made by various persons, and on various occasions, to the *Phenomenology*, as properly preceding the *Logic* of Hegel. 'The Thinking which in the *Phenomenology* works itself up out of the

phenomena, in the *Logic* produces itself freely – plays with itself' (Werder, p. 25). This is, perhaps, implied in Gabler's remark (Art. I, p. 519) that in the *a priori* (process) of dialectic movement, 'man's reproductive *reflection* has already *swallowed* the whole of the *a posteriori*' ('das menschliche reproductive *Nachdenken* [habe] das ganze Aposteriorische *bereits im Leibe*'). The expression can signify nothing but the digestion in the *Phenomenology*.

As to the *Phenomenology*, there seem to be only two positions possible for it. Either it is a link in the system, and then it is a part of the philosophy of the subjective spirit – and this, indeed, is the position assigned to it by Hegel in the *Encyclopaedia* – or it is propaedeutic, meant to educate the consciousness up to the speculative standpoint, in which case its place is before the system, and it stands in the external relation of an introduction.

Hegel, in the *Encyclopaedia*, produced his system as a whole, and it is the most complete outline of a system, whether we consider the whole or the parts, that the history of philosophy is acquainted with. We must accept the relations in which he here places the different branches to one another, as he gives them. Since, then, in the *Encyclopaedia*, the *Phenomenology* follows long after the *Logic*, the *Nature-Philosophy* and the *Anthropology* coming in between, we perpetrate a bad piece of anticipation if we appeal to the *Phenomenology* for the investigation of the dialectical method laid down in the *Logic* – an anticipation which rends Hegel's system of pieces. In view of the great unity which was Hegel's aim, we have thought it our duty to follow the *Encyclopaedia*, which was so often revised by him.

If we assume the second standpoint, and consider the *Phenomenology* as a propaedeutic to the absolute method, or to the standpoint of Speculative Logic, then it stands outside of the system, and has, as a preparatory exercise, a subjective importance, but no influence on the objective foundation of the system, which, on the contrary, aims, starting with the *Logic*, to produce itself from itself, and to comprehend itself in itself. The *Phenomenology*, then, is a propaedeutic to the *Logic*, as creeping is a propaedeutic to walking, arithmetic a propaedeutic to the logical syllogism. In this case no less than in the other, the appeal to the *Phenomenology* is an inconsistency, a mere subterfuge, which, however, does not escape the eye of the clear-sighted.

If the appeal to the *Phenomenology* were admissible, this work ought to be always read *before* the *Logic*, which is never done, or, if it ever is, only by way of introduction. If it were so read, there would result a somewhat odd circumstance. In the course of the whole, certain sections would occur *thrice*, for example life, first in the *Phenomenology* as a phenomenon, then in the *Logic* as an idea, and lastly in the *Philosophy of Nature*. What is the object of this? It is bad enough that life, for

example, is treated twice, once in the *Logic* and once in the *Philosophy of Nature*; and it has been shown that the idea of life produced from the pure concept is nothing more or less than intuition – which, indeed, is contemned, but which, in a clarified and enfeebled form, is accepted. If we admit, as was shown, that the *means* employed by the dialectic method are false, it is of no avail to appeal to the dialectic Phenomenology. Altogether people should not be always quite so ready with the *Phenomenology* in their talk; it is, and ever will be, a *liber laudatus magis quam lectus*.

Thus, likewise, is barred the attempt to defend the dialectic method by the aid of the *Phenomenology*.

But its defenders hold in reserve a brilliant retreat for themselves, by ascribing all objections brought against the absolute dialectic to mere imagination, which, in its very nature, they say, is incapable of reaching the pure concept. Anyone who questions the products of the absolute concept occupies the standpoint of the imagination, and, therefore, has no right to speak. When the pure concept is hedged round in this way, it becomes as unapproachable as the Holy of Holies. All possibility of coming to any understanding ceases, and one might as well try to make something out of the illuminations of a visionary, who treats all opposition precisely in this way, as out of speculative science. Be this as it may, all objections – to speak in the language of the school – are due to an ‘immanent’ criticism of the concept, to its own demands, assertions and consequences.

Never, in the history of philosophy, did the logical question assume so much importance as at present. Whereas, formerly, the attack had been directed against ‘the speculative theology’ flank, it now approaches closer to the centre, which supports the whole – the *Logic*. The contest regarding the logical question is a contest for the existence of the system. All the consequences which have developed themselves from Hegel stand or fall with it.

Profound investigation of objective reality and perspicuity of style will not reappear in philosophy until that false and exaggerated admiration of the dialectic unity of method which still fetters men’s minds whenever a new work appears, written according to this method, shall have given way; and philosophical science will then again speak an intelligible language, as human beings are wont to do, when it is compelled to give up its unintelligible, divine utterances – alias dialectic categories.

The dialectic method is a logical hypothesis. Is it, then, so difficult to come to clearness about its essence – its truth or untruth?

If by scientific procedure we mean one that is essentially necessary and universal, then the question that must arise for decision is simply this: *is Hegel’s dialectic method of pure thinking a scientific procedure?*

In view of the investigations already made, we must answer this question with a round negative. We do not mean by this that the dialectic method does not possess relatively even a certain scientific value. Such,

indeed, it possesses, as a preparative, measured by the standard of the Aristotelian dialectic, inasmuch it forces the concepts more sharply against each other, and defines them more clearly, whereas in the sense of being an absolute method it has no value whatever. Such it is not. It has exercised a powerful scientific influence by stretching the demands of Logic, but in so doing it has *over-stretched* itself. It possesses merely the importance of a relative reflection, but it is not an absolute production.

The proof of this has been adduced, but the refutation has yet to be brought forward. Verily, it will not be brought by the differences which have already manifested themselves within the Hegelian Logic, and whereof, we hear, more may yet be expected. After a long period of haughty stability, such moving and bustle are signs of internal insecurity and actual disturbance. But a work so rigidly carved out of one thought as Hegel's *Logic* will go far to verify the saying: *Sint ut sunt, aut non sint*. Mending and bolstering up will be of no avail, as Plato warns us in the *Statesman*: 'My good friend, it isn't safe to whittle here; it is much safer to cut right through the middle; one is much surer to come upon ideas.'

The undersigned is prepared, with all seriousness, to take up the investigation anew, provided opposite arguments of any moment are brought against him. But until a refutation is undertaken, let our friends at least leave off singing their old song about mental languidness and convenience, when scientific men do not recognize the dialectic method. A short time ago, something of this kind might have been read in a certain preface. If the investigation is shunned, the arrow may return and strike him who discharged it.

Science cannot live on criticism, which only expels what the living organism cannot assimilate. Where criticism reigns alone with its negativity, we are seized with a dull, heavy sense of discomfort, which necessarily accompanies such a process of decomposition. Decomposition and assimilation ought, on the contrary, as in breathing, to form but one activity. Then criticism, instead of repressing the life of science, increases it by purifying it. But since even Logic cannot satisfy itself with the mere critical result which rejects the dialectic method of pure thinking, the *Logical Investigations* entered, in a positive sense, into the facts of human thought, and tried to show that the science of the idea does not go down, but, on the contrary, becomes all the more certain, when the dialectic method, with its false sanctions, is rejected.

Investigation has at all times been accorded the right of conducting polemics, and only such polemics have been condemned as were not themselves investigations. If ever truth or its human incarnation, deliberate conviction, were to lose its polemical spirit, it would soon exhaust itself in lazy, idle self-enjoyment, and renounce the mission which it has

of reproducing itself in others, and of strengthening itself with victorious necessity in elements foreign to it. Certainty, which is the heart of truth, there can be none, where conflict is declined.

We, therefore, do not decline the contest. But every contest has its code of honour, for the maintenance of which a few words of preface will be needed.

In the *Logical Investigations*, Hegel's dialectic method was subjected by us, both as a whole and in detail, to a careful scrutiny; afterwards, in an article in the *Neue jenaische allgemeine Literatur-zeitung* (April 1842, Nos. 97 et sqq.), a résumé of the main points was given. In both cases the thing itself, and the thing only, was discussed, and called upon to defend itself.

Whence comes it, then, that the reply which has appeared – viz., Gabler's review in the *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* (1841, Oct., Nos. 65 et sqq.; 1842, Nov., Nos. 81 et sqq.; Dec., Nos. 114 et sqq.), afterwards published in book-form with some additions under the title, *The Hegelian Philosophy: Contributions towards the Formation of a Just Judgment, and Appreciation of it*. Part I, Berlin: Duncker, 1842 – threatens to turn the logical contest, which certainly, if anything, ought to be conducted with coolness, into a personal matter?

The author of the *Logical Investigations* is, without much obscurity of phrase, compared to a blustering thimble-rigger (*The Hegelian Philosophy*, pp. 81 et sqq.), or to a hangman's loon (p. 83), 'who would fain give the *coup de grâce* with a philosophical weapon to a philosophy already condemned, branded, and proscribed'. Attention is repeatedly called to the circumstance that he does not stand alone, but 'in close and formidable league with a whole great and powerful band of opponents, congregated from the most diverse directions'. A consequence which he did not draw at all, but which the history of the Hegelian Philosophy drew, is declared to be a 'slander' and an 'insinuation' against the Elders (p. 109).

Every person understands such language; it has been in fashion since people began trying to make out the Philosophy of Hegel to be persecuted freedom of thought, and its opponents slavish-minded eye-servants; the Philosophy of Hegel to be the sole light of the times, and its opponents to be the persons who would fain blow out this great light, in the interest of a tenebrous government, although there does not and cannot exist any such government at present. Such language is disingenuous, destitute of self-respect, and, therefore, unworthy of philosophy. Who would relegate any philosophy from the minds of thinkers, in which alone its dominion is, unless – being impotent and powerless to maintain itself – it so relegates itself? And such language the Hegelian Philosophy ought, less than any other, to adopt. For long years it enjoyed the tide of popularity, while we and others were buffeted by the wind of public opinion. Any

sailor who has been through a stormy day is bolder than that. But he knows where he is steering.

Without freedom of thought there is no philosophy; and anyone who desires only blind faith and blind obedience ought to have nothing to do with any philosophy; for if one part of a philosophy lent itself to fettering men's minds, the other and better part would set them at liberty. But it is quite a new idea for deceiving the multitude and the time, when one philosophy assures us that it has taken a general lease of freedom. If anyone desires to understand one phenomenon, or even one tendency of life, he must not stop with his bodily senses, as if he were in bondage to them, but he must, as if independent of them, rise spiritually above them, in order to master them. And the philosophy which is bold enough to go beyond the individual part, and to seek the thought of the whole, and the moving powers (*Gründe*) that lie behind it is to be called, or is capable of being, disingenuous! The greatest philosopher that ever contemplated human and divine things, Aristotle, declared philosophy to be the freest of the sciences – the only free science. Let us survey the two thousand years and more of life that philosophy has passed in our race so richly endowed with mind, and confess that, at the basis of all transformations of systems and of self-consciousness, there lies one common tendency – reason and freedom. Why, then, does one form out of many press itself forward and run about the market, with its whole body pasted over with the catchword 'freedom', writ so large that he that runneth may read, and calling out vociferously, 'Freedom! Help, help! or I shall be suppressed!?' When thought-masses can no longer support themselves, they go down; and when they are too great, no persecutor can do them any harm; on the contrary, they grow gigantic through persecution. Reason and Freedom! – these have, at all times, been taken for granted as the conditions of all philosophy. But how is Freedom understood at present? The mental concept is made as clear as daylight, while the eternal idea is left to the caprice of the next mutable moment. 'What is Freedom but opposition?' is a motto to which the newspapers try to give currency in our time, and we find the banner of Philosophy bearing the device, 'Freedom and Opposition'. Nothing could be more prejudicial to science, nothing more destructive of thoroughgoing free inquiry, than to mix up philosophy with the monetary passions of politics. Dragged into the arena of party strife, Science forgets the *cause* which it is its mission to elevate into an everlasting possession, and becomes a mere partisan of present interests; instead of the quiet and perseverance of painstaking study, it degenerates into habitual unrest and impatience amid the questions of the moment. It does not belong to Philosophy to bar itself off from the times; it is rather its mission to view them under the form of the eternal, and, undazzled by the chameleon colours of the present, to seek out and exhibit the enduring idea in them. A philosopher like Fichte knew what

nation and courage meant in days of humiliation and peril; and we believe as little as Fichte did in Philosophy's painting everything in neutral colours, and waiting till the forms of life have grown old ere it treat them, or in its forgetting the eagle which flies toward the sun, and beginning its flight only at the approach of twilight, like Minerva's owl. We have a living faith in the vigorous power of thought. But, for that very reason, we are ready to protest when a philosophy coquets with Freedom, and deals more with the flimsy, captivating word 'freedom' than with solid knowledge; or when, as if it enjoyed a monopoly of freedom of thought, like a demagogue in Plato's sense, it tries, with glib talk about Freedom, to ingratiate itself with the mob, or, what tends in the same direction, woos the favour of popular opposition against supposed oppressors.

What, after all, do those accusations of want of freedom, brought against the author of the *Logical Investigations*, mean? It is one thing to impute interested motives, another to refute work, the fruit of long years of patient thought. Under any circumstances, it would be better to tear the work to pieces before the eyes of the public, if it will not hold together, and to leave the author's private views entirely out of the question. Such, indeed, used to be the practice in the 'closed circle' (*geschlossenen Bunde*) of the Hegelian school, whenever it could be applied to works of hostile character. Now that other methods are appealed to, every unbiassed person will be able to find out the value and grounds to such imputations. The man who utters them cannot believe them himself, if he can cease feeling disconcerted and out of humour, and reflect on the plain facts. Or, does he not reflect that the Undersigned, whom, in tolerably plain terms, he degrades into the logical creature of a higher judgment not his own, was, already at the time when he himself received a call to propagate Hegel, occupying a position – though, indeed, a lonely one – at the same university, teaching as he does now, or that he has used his efforts in undisguised opposition to Hegel as long as he has been reading in his spirit? Perhaps he has never been made aware that the same Society or Scientific Criticism which has now, in the interest of the dialectic method, backed his insinuations, fourteen years ago, in Hegel's life-time and at Hegel's desire, returned a criticism *presented* by the Undersigned, because it contained objections to the dialectic method (which is still a matter under discussion), and especially against its application of Aristotle. It hardly requires the adduction of these facts to place the equivocal character of those imputations in their proper light, or, rather, in their own shadow. It is true that their hostile tone is repeatedly laid to the account of *necessary self-defence* (pp. 85, 176 etc.), the whole existence and reputation of the Hegelian Philosophy being at stake. This may be; but the question relates to the *matter* itself, and is not answered by attacking the author.



We shall, therefore, unhesitatingly resume the discussion of the *matter* itself, about which alone we have hitherto contended, and shall begin, where we find ourselves most at home, with its history. As we have promised to report upon the present state of the question, we would ask, in the first place, what has been done for or against Hegel's dialectic method since our first article.

In the notices which appeared to the *Logical Investigations*, judgments have been pronounced upon the dialectic method from the most diverse quarters. We shall not appeal to the voices of men who, like the prematurely deceased Kopp, the eminent student of ancient philosophy H. Ritter, E. Reinhold, Strümpel, known through his writings on Herbart, accepted the unfavourable criticism. One of these went so far as to say that the question was merely a local one, over which science need not spend so very much time. When we consider all the antecedents of these men, we need not be surprised if certain persons do not hesitate to declare their judgment biassed, however unbiased it may really be. When, however, men who were originally devoted to the dialectic method do not refuse their assent to the criticism whose results were communicated in the former essay, we perhaps get some idea of the strength of the cause.

First, the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* (April 1842, Nos. 83 et sqq.) gives a criticism signed by Wirth. As it overlooks the most essential portions of the work, and treats it as if these were not in it, one can hardly expect that it will meet with much favour. It is there, however, stated expressly that those 'who believe in the stability of the Hegelian Logic, or even admit that it is formally and quantitatively perfectible' are in error. Even the objective frame in which Hegel set his logic is admitted to be by no means the only positive one for the formal to exist in, it being a wholly unhistorical prejudice of our time to think that the choice lies only between the two etc. So Hegel's Logic was seen suddenly to give way, where a champion had been expected.

Weisse, who, in every contest against Hegel, affirms the dialectic method to be the abiding amid the transient, and who has himself employed it in his former writings and even in his metaphysics, while he complains that in the *Logical Investigations* the new form has not been sufficiently tested, nevertheless elsewhere asserts with an unreserved frankness for which we sincerely thank him that Hegel's dialectic method has in fact been refuted, and proved to be a method impossible in the general, and belying its own concept in the particular. 'Among the numerous objections', he continues, 'which the author raises both against the dialectic movement of the Logic and the realistic-philosophy portions of the Hegelian system, there will perhaps not be found one which could be refuted from the Hegelian premises and with strict adherence to the Hegelian concept of method. With *words* which, as everybody knows,

that school is ready with, wherever thought fails, of course it might be done; although even in the unmasking of this abuse, which is maintained with words – with the dialectic terminology – the author has displayed a merciless acumen, so that it would require no small amount of audacity to meet him again with the same artifices' (J. H. Fichte's *Zeitschrift*, 1842, Vol. 2, p. 273). We may, perhaps, not be blamed if, as an offset against the bitterness of one opponent, we adduce these words coming from another opponent to our opinion, in order to enable our readers to find their bearings.

In the contest against the dialectic method, there appeared an unexpected auxiliary in an able and vigorously written treatise, *The Psychology of the Hegelian School*, by Dr F. Exner, Professor of Philosophy in Prague. The author, aware that the Hegelian school have staked their whole fortune upon the dialectic method, as bold gamblers do upon one throw, and that it derives all its knowing from the application of the method, pursues this method through the whole of psychology, and does not leave a single nook into which it can skulk to hide itself. It is of great value, in a subject as concrete as psychology is, to have made clear what kind of science, or rather what scientific monstrosities, the boasted dialectic method gives birth to. When certain writers complain that the negative has never received fair treatment (Gabler, p. 171), they may take comfort in this one example, as an offset against all its successful performances (Exner, pp. 55 et sqq.). Will the dialectic method ever be able to raise its head again, after it has suffered discomfiture throughout a whole science?

In philosophical literature, however, no clear decision has been reached. It is true that there have appeared no works, written in the strict dialectic method, according to the discipline of the old Hegelian method. But while the vibrations which proceeded from Hegel's *Logic* are ceasing, an echo of it is still repeated, and, in conjunction with old melodies, produces new tunes. In *Wirth's Dialectic* are united dialectic and combination; in a recently begun *History of Philosophy*, which, in its excellent mode of presentation, strives evidently to attain freedom of form, dialectic alternates with analogy. Dr George, in his work entitled *Principle and Method of Philosophy*, has shown, with great acumen, the peculiar defects in the philosophies of Hegel and Schleiermacher, and, finding them standing in opposition to each other, he has improved the one method by the other, and melted them down into a new process. Care will have to be taken that the difficulties connected with the production of concepts – difficulties which occur both in Hegel and Schleiermacher – are not all transferred to the new process. Without disrespect to this new attempt, we must say that we have a certain dread of mongrel systems, as when we see Hegel revised by Schleiermacher, or, in another work that lately appeared, Hegel amended by Kant, or in a third, written in

a peculiar spirit, Hegel and Herbart worked up together. But in most of these attempts, if not in all, there comes out, as clearly as any literary fact can, the silent or expressed admission that Hegel's dialectic method, at least in original form, is not all that it ought to be.

Dr Marheineke, in his work *Introduction to Public Lectures on the Significance of the Hegelian Philosophy in Christian Theology* (1842, p. 30), writes: 'The Hegelian philosophy is not a philosophy having a particular and definite principle. We cannot, therefore, say one word, or in one sentence, what Hegelian philosophy is, or wherein it consists, as the phrase is. *Its principle we must look for in the method*, whose discovery was Hegel's everlasting prerogative, and one which, hitherto, has met with but very slight opposition.' It is not unusual for banking-houses, when they wish to remove the impression that they are on the eve of failure, to speak on 'change of the very slight losses which they have experienced. At all events, we would call special attention to the important words of the above statement: 'The principle of the Hegelian philosophy we must look for in its method.' Hitherto we had been of the same opinion, and, in view of Hegel's lectures and writings, we are unable to take the matter otherwise. We supposed that in particular the older school were willing to make the same admission. But, as in the Hegelian school generally discord is stronger than harmony, it seizes the older disciples in this fundamental thought, although, according to the writings of Marheineke and Gabler, these appeared to hold more closely together. Even Marheineke and Gabler disagree. Gabler teaches us that the dialectic method is not to be made the first thing or the principle. He tells us that we had been placing our batteries wrong, directing them against the dialectic method, and expecting thereby to destroy the Hegelian philosophy (pp. 113 et sqq.)

We shall pass over the clever *mutatio controversae*, as common logic calls it. In the *Logical Investigations* not a single word was said of destroying the Hegelian philosophy – though we might derive some superior instruction about how to proceed in such an attempt from the reply of our opponent (pp. 101 et sqq.) – but of testing the dialectic method. What result the refutation of it would have upon the existence of the system, we knew, might be left to take care of itself. All those demands which claim that we ought to have defined philosophy (pp. 101 et sqq.), or at least stated the difference between human and divine thinking (pp. 152 et sqq.), are invented merely to give the impression that there is something else in question than the clearly expressed subject of the dialectic method. We are satisfied if it is proved false, and leave to others the task of some day coming to Hegel's philosophical system with the prescription given on p. 101: 'When people try to break down a philosophical system, the question comes to be, what belongs to that system?' There are, perhaps, more points of attack than one. We are satisfied

with ours, and merely ask, in the spirit of Marheineke, whether Hegel's system will still be considered alive when the 'moving soul', the dialectic method, has gone out of it.

But why, after all, cannot the dialectic method be put in the foreground and made the principle? We hear the reasons (pp. 114 et sqq.): 'Otherwise', we are told first, 'we should have the opponents of Hegel upon us, and they make it a special business to represent the dialectic method as a mere invention of subjective thinking, without any internal necessity or unity with objective nature.' This argument, taken in connection with appended historical explanations, looks as if we might translate it: we must look for another principle, since this one no longer sustains itself. The second reason is given us in the words (p. 115): 'if the method itself were the absolute principle, the definition of the absolute would have to be: The Absolute or God is the dialectic method – which Hegel would certainly have indignantly rejected.' Anyone who takes the dialectic method as having the importance which Hegel attributed to it, as that in which pure form produces the content of reason, and anyone who has before his eyes such passages as § 237 of the *Encyclopaedia*, in which we are expressly told that nothing remains to the absolute idea, as form, but the '*method*' of the content, 'the determined knowing of the preservation of the moments', will be in great doubt about this supposed indignation of Hegel's, which might have had reference merely to the unwary expression. In both of these proofs, which are so external, lies the whole force and the whole depth of the reasons which are supposed sufficient to give the dialectic method another position than that which it has hitherto occupied, and to defend it and (through it) the system against attack. However, we shall leave this new difference, which is hardly inferior to any one of the old ones, to be settled by those who must be more concerned about the last refuge of the school, at least of the old one, and about the last token of union, than an opponent can be supposed to be.

It seems, however, to be a matter of solid earnest that the real significance of the Hegelian system consists in a certain mode of seizing the Absolute, to which Gabler has been at last led. Are we, then, to suppose that the presuppositionless dialectic method has been given up? Yes; and all the trouble spent in investigating it was thrown away upon a mere phantom of the imagination. For we are told in the preface (p. vii): 'Among the bogles, with which some people try to scare others, is the *bugbear of pure thinking*.' If Germany had so short a memory that the proud doctrine of the presuppositionless pure thinking no longer rang in its ears, it would at least have Hegel's *Logic* and *Encyclopaedia* to inform it what pure thinking means in fact and in name. We read, for example, in the *Encyclopaedia*, § 19: 'Logic demands that it should have the power – in opposition to all intuitions, even the abstract sensuous images of

geometry – to withdraw itself into pure thought, to grasp it and move in it' (cf. §§ 14, 17, 78 etc.). We read similar statements not only in innumerable other works which owe their origin to Hegel of the power and the feats of pure thinking, but even in Gabler's own textbook, *Introduction to Philosophy – Lehrbuch der philosophischen Propädeutik* (Erlangen, 1827) for example, pp. 31 et sqq.: 'In the assertion that "the object is as it is known", there is truth contained, if the knowing is an actual pure knowing, and such determinations of the object are treated as belonging to it through this knowing, which is at the same time pure thinking.' From this one may judge whether the 'bugbear of pure thought' is merely a new-spun 'chimera' which misapprehension has laid on the shoulders of Hegel's philosophy. For long years, and indeed until quite recently, pure thinking was the common watchword of the initiated. Whereby Hegel's disciples recognized each other, and passed as the central life-fountain of 'speculation'; and now people assert in all seriousness that when one has turned against this and struck it, one has not shot through the heart of the system, but only into the air.

Against this new acceptance we could not possibly have fought, simply because it was not in existence; and even if it had been in existence, we should have been obliged to decline discussing it, because, in the *Logical Investigations*, we had under consideration the original form of the Hegelian system, and not any of its numerous varieties. When, however, our opponent everywhere brings up this new acceptance (although we meet it here for the first time and only in dim outlines) as if we ought to have known it, the question comes to be whether, after all, this new acceptance is really so very much different from the old original doctrine of pure thinking which we investigated. We are told on page 156: 'Pure thinking is nothing more or less than that which, retreating back into itself, from its external distraction and manifoldness, and raising itself in its *pure activity of form*, already determined in and for itself, to the fountain of primal *content of thought*, produces and regains thus an ideal thought'; p. 159: 'The pure knowledge whose aim is absolute truth will reach that aim in *no other form* save that of the *absolute thing*.' 'It is the method which remains identical with the *thing* itself.' If we take these passages, as we might take others, in their connection, we can see very distinctly wherein Gabler's view differs from the view of those who recognize thinking only in man, and who hold that God is self-conscious only in the thinking human being. For he defines the content of human thinking as one that has been previously thought by God; he designates human thinking as 'a *second* thinking which returns to its origin, in the re-thinking of that which has been previously thought through all eternity'. Whether the deduction of this statement, given on pp. 123 et sqq., be sufficient, we will not undertake to say. The bolder view, represented mainly by Strauss, seems to us more consistent, and is more of a piece

with the whole spirit of the Hegelian philosophy. We do not desire, however, to pronounce any judgment on this, and are willing to accept Gabler's view for the time and for the present purpose. Is, then, by this long discussion, which is more a flourish of trumpets over the religious conscience of the Hegelian philosophy than a treatment of the logical question, the internal difficulty of pure thinking removed? Are the demonstrated contradictions of the presuppositionless dialectic solved? The cause is not at all bettered thereby. It is true it seems to be so; for throughout the whole of the reply, wherever the *Logical Investigations*, following Hegel, spoke of cognizing, by an important and careful correction, recognizing is substituted, and wherever, following Hegel, they spoke of the production of thinking, reproduction is substituted. Where, then, has Hegel, in all his works, spoken half as much of *re*-thinking, of *re*-cognizing, of *re*-production as Gabler has done in this one book? However, we need not be deceived by the words. In the reply, they are not understood to mean that that which is received through the senses is reproduced from the unity of its concept, or that which is cognized through experience in the individual from the necessity of the whole and the universal. The words 'recognition' and 'reproduction' do not apply to the antithesis existing between the receptive perception and the thinking which manipulates the matter thereof, but only to the fact that the content of the thought has been previously thought by God, and that therefore the creation of the divine spirit is created anew in the human spirit. If this altered mode of expression, giving us recognition and reproduction, related to the condition of all experience, the relation of the *Phenomenology* to the system would at once come into question; but Gabler will not condescend (p. 205) to an explanation upon this fundamental point, which, as our first article showed, stands so much in need of one. Is anything gained, then, by this correction? We investigated human thinking, and asked whether it has at its command any such creative dialectic as Hegel has asserted and employed. We returned an answer in the negative, because the concepts upon which the dialectic rests broke down, and because the means which it employed were mere delusions. Has our author anything to say in reply? Does he deny the creative dialectic? Far from it. He shows (pp. 158 et sqq., 168) that the formal activity of the human and of the divine thinking are the same. But since the form produces the content, as Hegel essentially teaches, the formal activity of the human (the pure) thinking produces the content of the divine thinking, 'the absolute thing', and is therefore, as far as the system of thoughts is concerned, as creative as the divine thinking. If this is the truth, and anyone who will read Gabler's reply may convince himself of it (pp. 156, 159 et sqq.), the new view, as far as our objections are concerned, is not one whit better than the old one. We shall, therefore, hardly be expected to investigate very closely this new construction

of the divine spirit (pp. 144 et sqq.) which moves along with the old formulas of self-differentiation and mediation, of in-itself and for-itself. It employs the already discredited dialectic instruments as if they were unassailed, or as if they had safely escaped from attack – which no one will assert, since our author very wisely declines to enter upon a discussion of them (p. 204). A person who does not wish to go (*gehen*) the long examination of human thinking takes a short leap into the divine thinking, and is more at home there than in his own ego. Is he, then, prophet or philosopher, theosophist or logician? Perhaps, in both cases, neither; for the first requires enthusiasm, the second strictness. But a person puts on the appearance of metaphysical profundity when he deals more easily with the divine thinking than with the first and most individual phenomenon, which one has to study the whole of physics in order to understand.

It has been often enough repeated, and Germany knows the formula by heart, that Hegel's great merit is that he defines God as a subject, in contradistinction to Spinozism, which defines him as substance. In the reply this is likewise enlarged upon (p. 116 *et alibi*). It may, perhaps, have been necessary to call attention on every possible occasion to this, inasmuch as a modern Spinozism has developed itself out of Hegel. An appeal is made to the consciences of those opponents who 'assault Hegel with murderous intent, and mercilessly mangle him' not to condemn a philosophy in which God is assumed to be *spirit* (p. 131). Hegel's highest absolute principle is made to depend upon the significance of *subject* (p. 116), and the *Logical Investigations* are treated cavalierly because they do not touch this point – this solution, given by Hegel – of the fundamental question of all philosophy. Is this last true! In a philosophy of cognition the mere dogma counts for nothing, while the process by which it is reached and proved counts for everything. The question therefore is how this applies to Hegel. In him, the said process is based on the important and difficult part of the *Logic* (*Encyclopaedia*, §§ 150 et sqq.) in which it is supposed to be shown how, according to dialectic reason, the necessity which is the attribute of substance passes over into the freedom of the idea. There and nowhere else in Hegel is the *primum movens* which draws the thinking on from substance to subject. In the *Logical Investigations*, therefore (I, pp. 50 et sqq.<sup>1</sup>), this most important of all dialectic transitions, upon which the weight of the whole system rests, was carefully considered, and shown to be without any support, and to give way and vanish as soon as it is touched. While substance may get outside of itself, subject, we are told, is with itself (*apud se*). But it was shown that this being-with-itself of Hegel's rests merely upon a vague, feeble comparison – a play of similar expressions. It was demonstrated that the process by which it was reached would apply as well to blind emanation as to free creation from the idea of purpose, and that,

hence, it contains no progress from the doctrine of substance to subject. The logical difficulty was at the same time made apparent; for it was the logical question that was under discussion. How does the reply venture to speak as if no notice had been taken of this determination, which is supposed to condition all the rest? Does it go even so far, seeing that it appeals so often to the elevation of substance to subject, as to remove those inherent obstacles which were shown to exist? It was easier to pass over the objections raised without *one word* of comment. If, however, it is true that, in Hegel, the doctrine which is so warmly recommended in the reply rests, in its deepest metaphysical basis, on this sole point of the *Logic*, then that doctrine must stand or fall with it.

That, in its new shape, it seeks for a new support is of no consequence; if it is to continue true to Hegel, it cannot get round this original ground; while, if it does not continue true to Hegel, it no longer comes within the limits of our discussion.

In Hegel's *Logic*, the point in question is one of the boldest turns taken by the negativity. If, as is the case, the reply accuses us of not having considered closely enough this fundamental law of all thinking, which is likewise a fundamental law of all being, what we have said above is a sufficient refutation of the charge. Why should the reply at all insist upon investigations, seeing that it itself does not condescend to any of those proposed to it! It is, however, the opposite of correct to assert that the Negativity has not been investigated. The Negativity, the perpetual spur of the dialectic movement of thought, so highly extolled again in the reply, rests, in Hegel's view, on negation and identity; and indeed on the latter, inasmuch as it is the negation of negation. Both these logical appliances were fully and fairly put to the test, both in their principle and in their different applications, and rejected as ambiguous and untenable (*Log. Inv.* I, pp. 30–56). Sometimes, in Hegel, the Negativity shoots off on the leaping-pole of the *progressus in infinitum*; but it also broke down under the hands of criticism (*Log. Inv.* I, pp. 55 et sqq.) Before Gabler asserted that the author of the *Logical Investigations*, having no knowledge of the fact that the negativity was the soul in the forms of dialectic development, or of the manner of its operation, had not specially made it a subject of criticism, he might have read those passages, or else he might have shown what *logical element*, besides those discussed, was contained in the negativity. It was incumbent upon him not to repeat in vague terms a eulogy on negativity, but simply, in accordance with this fundamental law, to employ the energetic negation of negation on the negation of our criticism, so as not to allow the negativity to stick fast in the negation, but to bring it out in the positivity claimed for it. But there was not even an attempt made in this direction.

'Negativity' is an imposing word; as an abstraction, it keeps the intuition suspended and the mind in wonderment. As Plato in the



*Philebus* tells us that the youth triumphed as if they had found a treasure of wisdom when they made their first acquaintance with the One and the Many, and, in their enthusiasm, applied it to every concept, so precisely it is with the cognate fundamental law of negativity: for, of course, everything is intrinsically negative, in everything there is flux, in everything there is distinction; and what is easier than to place the aim 'which repels itself from itself' under negativity? But the result is much less considerable in the case of the negativity than in that of the great treasure-house of 'the One and the Many'; for it is such an abstraction as no longer represents an original and productive Universal, but has upset itself and thus lost all tangibility. If we are honoured with some sprinklings of praise, because the principle of motion brought forward in the *Logical Investigations* is similar to negativity, we object to any such kinship. Negativity is like a large mantle, of which many folds can be made, to stow away the most various things. It is, as our investigation has shown, entirely indefinite and ambiguous. Against it the *Logical Investigations* rebelled, and endeavoured to free the conceptive faculty from the spell with which this and similar words had bound it. They restored to intuition its freedom, and thereby to thought its definiteness, by proving that movement, which outlines and produces a picture, was the intellectual principle of intuition and *form*. The Proteus of negativity would do well to keep at a respectful distance from it; he would meet his death in it.

In the *Logical Investigations*, and in the brief statement afterwards published, the result of the inquiry into the dialectic method went to show that it was *per se* impossible. Our author feels, in spite of his attempt to make the position of the dialectic method less fatal, that still Hegel's philosophy becomes an impossible system, and therefore enters the strongest protests against this ruling. Is the existence of the case a proof of its intrinsic possibility? That will not pass muster; for, as the reply itself says, the very questions at issue are those of existence and recognition. Or, was the judgment in the *Logical Investigations* merely a feint announced with a flourish of trumpets? Neither can that be asserted. For the judgment was well supported by the proofs brought forward in the course of a long investigation. It was proved, and in the statement of the position of the question again asserted, that all the logical means used by the dialectic method fell to pieces, and, measured by the standard of their own purpose, were sadly insufficient and even impossible. The simple conclusion was that the dialectic method was intrinsically impossible, because its means were so. From this demonstration, apart from good assurances, which are not spared but which avail nothing, there is but one means of escape. It would have to be shown that those logical means (negation, identity, progress *in infinitum*) really perform what they promise, and, just because they perform it, have an energetic actuality over and above their intrinsic possibility. Has this been done? The reply takes

the shorter way of preferring not to touch the point at all (p. 204). We are perfectly satisfied with this, since, supported by the old grounds, we may again pronounce the judgment that the dialectic method of pure thought is in itself impossible, and add that it has not been rendered a whit more possible by the reply in question.

Hegel's *Logic* asserted that, as opposed to all intuition, even to the geometric figure, it moved in the element of pure thought, and, without any presupposition, developed from this alone an uninterrupted 'immanent' series of metaphysical concepts. We, on the other hand, showed both in general and in particular that the presuppositionless logic everywhere presupposes the principle and the general activity of intuition, and thus in secret possesses a picture which in public it contemns; we showed that, instead of developing from itself a closely knit series, it smuggled in the despised intuitions of experience, diluted and weakened, and gave them out as products of its own soil. What has the reply to say to this thorough-going proof? 'The manifest discovery', it says (pp. 193 et sqq.), 'does not touch the thing itself – the pure concepts – in their distinct form, but merely their origin – the source from which they come into thought'; it does not touch the *what* of the pure immaterial concepts and determinations of thought, but rather *their origin in thought*. In the first instance, this is certainly the whole question. Did the assertion of presuppositionless thinking, and of immanent interconnection, mean anything else than that the concepts did not flow from a foreign source, for example from intuition, but from the native one of pure thought? Only the delusiveness of this magnificent promise was to be shown. The reply, if we understand it correctly, admits this proof – and how much is thereby admitted – but it consoles itself with the distinction that the question of the *whence* does not touch the *what*. Is this possible in the present instance? Hitherto, for example, it was asserted in Hegel's *Logic* that continuous and discrete, extensive and intensive magnitude, attraction and repulsion, all occurring in the first part of the *Logic*, not as concrete examples and applications, but as the purest determinations, were to be seized as concepts of the pure thinking without intuition, and therefore without that movement which produces the geometrical figure. If the opposite of this it has been proved, it touches the *what* of the pure concepts so far, that there are no such 'pure concepts' in disjunct form. The author of the reply is perhaps aware of this; for he glides rapidly over the dangerous point, and vents his spleen in heavy charges of empiricism and materialism, with which he loads the *Logical Investigations*.

We shall not waste a word on these charges, since the person who can believe that such accusations will cling to the work cannot have read it, or must have read it merely with the eyes on his face. It is true that it does not deal with any sort of dialectic idealism, which, unconcerned

about any connection with the other sciences and despising any contradiction which the latter, with the support of facts, might raise against Philosophy, dwells on the royal heights of the pure idea, with an empire all to itself, perfectly secure against being confounded with empiricism. If, however, Philosophy is, as Schleiermacher somewhere calls it, the central science, and there is no centre except with reference to the circumference, just as there is no circumference save with reference to the centre, then surely the time has come at last to strive for further progress, and to bring about a living connection between the central and the peripheral sciences. Logic must become a metaphysic of the actual sciences, in the sense that it must comprehend their real principles in order to comprehend the act of thinking within its sphere, and thus to become a true logic. Are we to be accused of empiricism because we deal with experience in this sense? The fact that we are so accused is indeed perfectly intelligible from the standpoint of dialectic idealism, but not from that of impartial criticism, which would have justice enough to remark and to recognize that we on all occasions and even in the very midst of experience look only for its spiritual origin, i.e. the very thing which has not experience in it.

It was our wish, in writing the previous article, to treat the logical question in Hegel's system by itself, and to keep apart, as something altogether foreign, our own logical investigations in so far as they investigate positively the essence of cognition. In the reply, the two are commingled, and defence, as is perfectly fair, is supplemented by attack. We must therefore add a few words in regard to the method of criticism, in order to remove from the question at issue the false lights and shadows that are thrown upon it from this quarter.

Firstly, there is one thing characteristic. In a long book written to criticise another, the reader looks in vain for the real content of the latter, as forming the basis of the criticism. He looks in vain for an outline of the *Investigations*, for a sketch of their method, for the sum of their results, for a presentation of the fundamental thought. Only from such a survey could he derive a notion of what the *Logical Investigations* specially attempt, and whether they unite to form a spiritual whole. A person who knows a system only by the headings of the paragraphs is not likely to find it in them: whereas the person who is able to follow it through the windings of the investigations and to restate it in his own words will not miss it. When the reader of the reply puts it down, he is as wise respecting the purpose and essence of the *Logical Investigations* as he was before he took them up; or, what is perhaps worse, his head is filled with the most contradictory judgments, since the reply is a perfect conglomerate of appreciation and depreciation, respect and disrespect. At one time, the author of the *Logical Investigations* is a disciple of Aristotle, who, be it remembered, is counted by Hegel among the specu-

lative philosophers; at another time, he is an empiricist and a materialist, utterly destitute of anything speculative: according to one passage, he fights with Hegel for the present world-consciousness; at another, he is related only to Bacon and Locke, although these are long ago buried for German science; at one time, his philosophy is valuable as a propaedeutic which might pass for Hegelian; at another, he has written only for 'business men' (p. 177); at one time, the *Logical Investigations* appear to merit a place among literary productions; at another, they are described as a mere rude compilation, without plan or principle (pp. 178 et sqq.), so that the reader cannot help wondering why, for the sake of such a book, our author undertook to write another book, and why he found himself compelled by it to put his old system into a new shape; at one time, the reply attributes to the development of the categories and principles (*principia*) a value which it afterwards lowers by the additional assertion that Hegel *also* has them, only in a somewhat different shape (?!); at one time, he denies to the enumeration (which, a moment before, he called development) every claim to system; in another place, it honours the organic world-view with which the *Logical Investigations* close with a certain amount of applause; at another, it hints that this world-view is such as might be suitable for children, although, of course, it would be of no use to them, as they do not philosophize (p. 188).

But has Gabler quite perused, or quite overlooked, the *Logical Investigations*, about which he has written a book? We must be allowed to express our doubts. He would hardly, for example, have ventured (pp. 184 et sq.), in plain terms, to refer the author of the *Logical Investigations* to Hegel's treatment and derivation of the categories, if he had remembered that the same had been subjected to a careful examination (*Log. Inv.* II, pp. 62 et sqq.) in which they were shown to be entirely unequal to developing the possibility of this concept and proving the necessity of its dominance. He would hardly, had he known the whole, have given all kinds of good counsels, which the *Logical Investigations* had long ago followed of their own accord (for example cf. p. 184 *ad fin.* with *Log. Invest.* II, pp. 62 et sqq.). He would hardly have hinted – we cannot understand the passage otherwise (p. 187) – that the *Logical Investigations*, pregnant with materialism, 'looked upon thought as a mere accessory, or something merely secondary and superinduced', if he had considered, what is pointedly shown (II, pp. 62 et sqq.), that the world, penetrated as it is with purpose, can be understood only by admitting the priority of thought. He would hardly have charged the *Logical Investigations* with a blind reverence for nature (for example p. 179), if he had only remarked their general tendency, which is to prove that the comprehension of nature, in movement and in purpose, is derived entirely from the original Spiritual in nature. He would hardly have ventured to tax the whole view with vulgar empiricism (pp. 193, 197 etc.), if he had

considered that same general tendency, and if he had been aware of the war which the *Logical Investigations* wage with empiricism, and that too in the very midst of the facts, for the sake of this tendency (for example I, pp. 206 et sqq., 274 et sqq. etc.). He would scarcely have had the hardihood to assert (p. 200) that the *Logical Investigations* abandon the apriority of time and space, while, on the contrary, they everywhere strive to prove that the spiritual apriority of movement with its products, time and space, alone affords a key to the great scientific, *a priori* fact of pure mathematics, and use every effort to show that the objectivity of these categories is not thereby excluded, and that the same apriority is the basis of all empiricism (cf. the whole of Investigations 5 and 6, pp. 124–277). He would hardly have ventured to squeeze a single expression respecting the idea till he brought out of it the result that, according to the *Logical Investigations*, it is only as substance (Spinozan?!) that God lies at the basis of the world (p. 189), if he had remembered that the idea is idea only through the creative thought of aim (*Zweck*) (II, pp. 359 et sqq.). He would hardly have ventured to counsel the *Logical Investigations* to follow the fundamental principle of the Hegelian system, which is, at the same time, the logical principle of form, through the sphere of philosophy, and prove it insufficient and incapable of explaining anything, if he had reflected that the section on the dialectic method and the criticism of the Hegelian notion of aim have performed the said task, and that it is precisely Hegel's logical principle of form that so completely breaks down in the detailed examination of his development of the judgment (II, pp. 190 et sqq.) and the syllogism (II, pp. 251 et sqq.). He would scarcely have said that the *Logical Investigations* were unacquainted with the Hegelian syllogism, and acted as if they had confounded it with the scholastic syllogism, if he had remembered how (II, pp. 251–79) they first turn it round and consider it from all sides, before they declare that Hegel's twisted theory of three times three syllogisms, which are supposed to produce and classify the system of things in their reality, was manufactured and untrue. These facts are incredible, but they are facts. If our author could overlook all these and many other things, where, with such defects of knowledge and misconceptions in regard to matters of fact, remains the right to criticize?

The author of the reply cannot get rid of himself. For what is peculiar in the writings of others, for the specific in the *tout ensemble* of the doctrine of his opponents, he has no eye, and, therefore, no expression. He evidently feels hostile to an investigation which pursues a path different from his, and which takes pains, in dealing with the elements of thought, till, after quiet progress, it comes at last to a point at which the elements necessarily coalesce in the fact of a whole. Ever and everywhere the absolute comes up in his writing, as if it were the only question, and as if human thinking, which, after all, in the broad sphere of the sciences,

thinks the finite in the first instance, did not move at all in the finite. It shows itself likewise in the outward form, so that he never succeeds in bridling and controlling the association of his own ideas long enough to make those of other people his own. For while, as a general rule, people are not given to interrupting each other, he everywhere interlards other people's statements with interjections and remarks of his own. When these parentheses and interjections are taken away, there remains very little counter-argument. But parentheses will hardly pass for discussions, or interjections for solid judgments. After all, there is a great difference between real and manufactured consequences. Real ones lie in that which is based upon a principle, and such of those scientific consequences as do not appear in the *Logical Investigations* will be shown hereafter in the further carrying out of the thought. Manufactured consequences, on the other hand, lie in one-sided half-truths picked up at random, and in words caught and pressed into service (p. 189). We decline to accept any ransom for the captives taken in our work; they will get freed without our help, in the mind of the intelligent reader. The objections raised in the reply are altogether not of a kind to prevent us in any way from continuing our superstructure on the basis of the *Logical Investigations*. At the same time, it is quite natural that our opponents should try to make us occupy an 'obsolete standpoint' (*überwunderer Standpunkt*), one assigning us to empiricism, a second to Aristotle, a third to Kant, a fourth to Herakleitos. Let us, think they, dress him up in some old worn-out dress of the world-spirit; and the present, which wants fashion, will not look at him. There is, perhaps, reason in that. How many standpoints, however, Hegel has made obsolete is shown by the present rebellion of all.

It is the aim of the reply to force the examination of human thought ever towards the Absolute, and to maintain Hegel's Absolute – although in a new shape, which will perhaps be as little recognized by foes or friends as Gabler is inclined to recognize the dressing up of Hegel's in the gold frame of fancy and the trappings of poetry (p. IV). But as this new shape, like every other shape which calls itself an emanation from Hegel, rests on the dialectic method, everything, as was shown in the previous article, reduces itself to the question whether the dialectic method of pure thinking is correct. If it is false, there arises from it no knowledge, and no new mode of seizing the Absolute. It is therefore of no use to swing round in one's own circle; the question always comes up again: what has been done to redeem the dialectic method? For it is the basis of the whole.

In the previous article, the main points at issue were clearly set forth. They were

1. The suppositionless beginning;

2. The immanent interconnection;
3. The significance of the negation;
4. The power of identity;
5. The application of the *progressus in infinitum*;
6. The methodical *hysteron-proteron* of the dialectic development;
7. The delusiveness of the Hegelian syllogism.

Among these, again, the assertion of the absence of presupposition, the negation and the identity stand prominent as the real pillars of the whole edifice. In the reply, there is as good as nothing on all these points – at least, there is scarcely one word looking at all like a refutation, or really bringing home a misapprehension. It brings no danger except to the cause which the reply defends, when it refuses to occupy itself with all these things, or, as we say, does not stand up and hold its own. Thus, then, the *Logical Question in Hegel's System* stands at precisely the same point where it stood at the close of the previous essay; there is not a single iota cleared up. At best, we have been shown, by one example, how it *cannot* be cleared up.

We are told in the *Theaitetos* of Plato, in connection with that movement to which Hegel compared the negativity, concerning the disciples of the profound Herakleitos:

About these speculations of Herakleitos which, as you say, are as old as Homer, or even older still, the Ephesians themselves, who profess to know them, are downright mad, and you cannot talk with them about them. For, in accordance with their textbooks, they are always in motion; but as for dwelling upon an argument or a question, and quietly asking and answering in turn, they are absolutely without the power of doing this; or, rather, they have no particle of rest in them, and they are in a state of negation of rest which no words can express. If you ask any one of them a question, he will produce, as from a quiver, sayings brief and dark, and shoot them at you; and if you inquire the reason of what he has said, you will be hit by some other new-fangled word, and *will make no way with any of them, nor they with one another*.

## Note

- 1 Third edition, pp. 51 et sqq. – Tr.

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**Extract from *Hegel and his Times* (1857)**

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Rudolf Haym

**Prussia and the Philosophy of Law**

At a time when unimaginativeness as such takes the liberty of mocking at the ideology of philosophers, it is no thankful job to arraign a philosophical system. Yet by doing so, we do no more than pay homage to the power of ideas. For it was, in truth, not through the ill-will of the mighty, or through governmental measures, that philosophy came to lose its influence. It had to acquiesce in its own deposition; it alone was able to open the doors to elements hostile to itself. One step towards this self-destruction – only a single step, it is true, but a very big one – is the Hegelian philosophy of law. It is the latter which is mainly responsible for the fact that the highest science has been reduced to an object of contempt and has become well-nigh impotent in the face of the forces of reality!

We arraign, however, by understanding. Hegel came as a stranger to Prussia. He had sought for a reality in life corresponding to his general conception since attaining manhood. He had made the best of the worst of realities; he had found refuge from their defects in the elaboration of his ideal world, and had found a complement thereof in the fabricated reality of his concepts. The deception which lay in this latter beginning was able to survive for as long as his creative powers and his imagination were still relatively fresh, and for as long as in his own world, the world of theory, there was work and organizing to be done. This world, however, was now finished. The man's soberness and sense of reality were as bound to compel him beyond the whole philosophical edifice and into living reality as within his theory they had driven him out of logic into the philosophy of nature. It no longer sufficed for him that life existing in the present and life constructed in concepts should partially and alternately supplement each other: if he were not to fall out with the one or



the other, it was necessary for him to *rediscover his entire system in reality*. As reality in *abstracto* was supposed to be identical with the concept, there was bound to make itself felt in the end the need for *one*, one particular and concrete reality to demonstrate and confirm his own belief in his system. This need was met by the Prussian state. However this state might have been constituted, it was better by far than anything Hegel had seen in the way of practical realities. Here there was more state and more statelike being than in Bavaria or Württemberg. Here there was more reason and more freedom than under Napoleon or Montglas. The ordered running of the Prussian administration, the regularity of the bureaucratic machinery, the liberal foundations of the proposed constitution impressed the philosopher. He saw science cherished and protected with munificence; he saw himself as the spearhead of the spirit of enlightenment – which was as yet a long way from being theoretically disclaimed.

It is true that the spirit of reaction was announcing itself in no uncertain terms. It was during the first year of Hegel's activity in Berlin that the unhappy system of persecution began the memories of which still bring shame and bitterness. It was Prussia herself who took the lead in pursuing those measures of the pettiest tyrant style which were the precursors of the resolutions of Karlsbad and a prelude to placing the whole of Germany under police supervision. In all this there was no political understanding, no order, no honour, no respect for freedom and learning. Many realized then for the first time what Germany had to expect soon thereafter from Prussia. A statesman like von Humboldt found reason in this to break with the prevailing system. Scholars the like of Schleiermacher and Dahlmann protested against the affront put upon the German universities and their teaching staffs. But Hegel was made of different stuff. For Hegel, strange as it may sound, this very activity of the Prussian government was further proof that he was living in a state where genuine freedom prevailed, in a state *par excellence*, in an exemplary and ideal state. It was not so much with his views as with his sympathies and antipathies that on this point the government was absolutely at one. That which inspired the government, by reason of its bad conscience, with fear inspired him, in keeping with his entire way of being and thinking, with repugnance. The play with words and fire at the Wartburg, the puerile attempts to free Germany by the dagger from her enemies offended and outraged his earnest tendency to abide by objective order. In his heart of hearts he loathed the sentimental romanticism of Burschenschaft activities, loathed no less the vague wranglings of the newspapers and of the market. He had once taken the field against the hollowness of philosophical romanticism, just as he had fought against the shallowness of the philosophy of common sense. He had set up his logic against the appeal to feeling, his absolute metaphysics against the metaphysics of subjectiv-

ism. In the attitude that a man like Fries now adopted towards the political questions of the day he perceived a combination of everything he deemed scientifically false and morally perverted. In the eccentricities of the youth he saw a manifestation of the natural practical consequences of a shallow philosophy of feeling and a superficial philosophy of understanding. His opposition towards the latter heightened itself into bitterness towards the former. It was with similar feelings of bitterness that the statesmen of Karlsbad had voted; and it was with such feelings that their decisions had been executed by Kamptz and Tschoppe. By imprisoning and interrogating the singers and speakers of the Wartburg and the students and gymnasts, the state, according to Hegel, was merely performing the function proper to it, while the police were merely saving and preserving the right of reason from the arrogance of subjective opinion and desire.

The *Philosophy of Law*, as already mentioned, most clearly reflects this turn of events or, rather, this fate of the Hegelian doctrine, the transformation of an absolute idealism into a Restorationist idealism. The *Preface* of this book is justifiably notorious. For in the first place it is nothing other than a scientifically formulated vindication of the Karlsbad police system and the persecution of demagogues. In terms whose irritability and heavy calibre recall the attacks made at the same time by Stein against men and doctrines Stein did not know, the *Preface* assails all those who took the liberty of holding personal views on the state's rationality and of transforming these views into desires and demands. As the representative of these theorizing and postulating politicians it selects a man who should have been rendered immune from all attacks on the part of philosophy, not merely by his character, but rather and unqualifiedly by the circumstance that he was a person already outlawed by the police. Not enough, however, to heap on the Friesian doctrine all the reproaches which Hegel was otherwise wont to cast in separate attacks at the Romantics and at the representatives of the Enlightenment, at the Jacobinic and Kantian movements; not enough to brand Fries the 'commander-in-chief' of the prevailing 'shallowness' and the 'pettifogger of arbitrariness' and in this way to draw a caricature of his doctrine: in addition to all this, philosophy makes common cause with the police and passes from attack and accusation to personal denunciation and to incitement of the public authorities. It is not so much Fries the philosopher as Fries the speaker at the Wartburg with which our *Preface* is concerned; it is expressly approved that 'the governments have at last directed their attention towards such philosophizing', and it is to be hoped, so the *Preface* adds, that office and title will not become a talisman for principles 'which lead as much to the destruction of inner morality and the righteous conscience as to the destruction of public order and the laws of the state'. Indeed, proof enough of how rapidly the venom

of bureaucratic police views was then eating into people's minds: Hegel followed this first step by a second, letting indignity be succeeded by absurdity. The incident is familiar enough. A reviewer of the *Philosophy of Law* in the *Hallische Literaturzeitung* criticized the ignoble manner in which the work's Preface treated 'the already humbled Fries'. Now Hegel in his turn called this a denunciation; now he found it intolerable 'that it should be possible for a Prussian official to be made suspect in a journal supported by the munificence of the Prussian government'; now he spoke of the dangers of too great a freedom of the press; now he demanded and received satisfaction from the Minister of Culture.

It is indeed difficult to find justification for even the first half of this procedure in Hegel's 'objective cast of mind', since in the second half zeal for the matter itself is identified all too crudely with zeal for his own person. What is worse, however, is that the guilt from which one wishes to save the philosopher falls back all the more certainly on his philosophy. For it is true that these accusations and this disdainful criticism did not spring from personal motives; they had their real roots in the ethical and – in the final instance – general philosophical view of the author of the *Philosophy of Law*. Supporting the critique of Friesianism, opposed to the policy of progress and demands, our Preface contains the classical pronouncement of the spirit of Restoration, *the absolute formula of political conservatism, quietism and optimism*. 'What is rational', Hegel, in his anti-demagogic and anti-subjectivist zeal, has printed in capitals as the inscription of his *Doctrine of the State* and of his *System* – 'what is rational is real; and what is real is rational.' Philosophy, he expounds further, is the plumbing of the rational, is for this very reason the comprehension of the present and the real, not the setting up of a transcendent and non-being which exists nowhere other than in the 'error of a one-sided, empty reasoning'. The purpose of the philosophy of law cannot be to construct a state as it should be, but rather to comprehend the state as it is. This means, means it clearly and unmistakably: that demand for reality which in metaphysics elevates abstractions to 'concrete concepts', which twenty years prior to this had made the journalist Hegel rebellious against the unsteady reality of the German Reich, which then induced him to set up a Platonizing metaphysics of the state – this self-same demand, to achieve satisfaction and for the sake of appeasement, makes do with what in ordinary language people call the real. It is the comprehension of the practical reality of the state *such as exists in 1821 in Prussia* with which Hegel charges ethics, just as Bacon charged the philosophy of nature with the comprehension of sensuous nature. Just as the latter was concerned not with rambling among abstract ideas, but with the purposeful and true interpretation of nature, the former is concerned, not with the setting up of ethical ideas and postulates, but with the resigned and faithful interpretation of the existing order of the state. This existing

state, the existing customs and laws, 'which in times of old were still regarded with respect and awe' – these are for Hegel the sovereign object of philosophical ethics. Kant had once taught this science to fly higher; now, returning from heaven to earth, it bears the mark of a more petty and fearful time. Face to face with reality, temporal-human reality, idealism lays down its arms, believing itself able to maintain its honour and its name only in subordination to this reality. All moral élan has departed from life and, for this very reason, from philosophy too. 'Absolute idealism' has again become reconciled with the *quidditates* and *entitates* against which Bacon's argumentation was rightly directed; for Hegel has helped the latter to acquire artificial reality and content. The ethical ideas, however, which have their roots only in strength of will and energy of mind – these are for him the idols which must be cast down and exchanged for the reality of ethical institutions such as exist in the present. In this way the poles of the hitherto existing idealism become reversed. There had existed since Kant an ethical, but no longer a speculative, metaphysics; now there exists a speculative, but no ethical, metaphysics. Once again the practical spirit is weak and feeble, the intellectual spirit strong and eager to believe. With the proud word 'comprehend' – proud because it is backed by the entire profundity and prolificness of the new logic – this intellectualism conceals its submissiveness towards the existing, practical realities. Its attitudes towards these realities resembles that of the Greeks towards the Romans, when, after having been conquered by the Romans' weapons, the Greeks became through their spirit and culture the conquerors of their conquerors. It deludes itself about this submission with the honour of peace and the ideological appearance of equal status; indeed, it dares to call the abdication by the name of freedom. 'What lies between reason as self-conscious spirit and reason as present reality, what separates the former reason from the latter and prevents it from finding satisfaction in the latter, is', says Hegel, 'the fetter of some abstraction or other that has not been freed to become a concept.' The highest that philosophy must achieve is the 'conciliation with reality', the 'warm peace with it which knowledge brings about'.

It lies in the nature of things, so it appears to me, that a government standing on the slippery slope of reaction, and yet vain of its protection of science, should have accepted the hand so freely offered it by philosophy. Hegel fully deserved, as far as I see, the testimonial which Altenstein wrote him for his *Philosophy of Law*, a testimonial which, as it were, declared him to be the official Prussian philosopher of the Restoration and of the state. As far as I see, all that the Hobbes and Filmer, the Hallers and Stahls ever taught is a relatively liberal doctrine compared with that notorious pronouncement concerning the rationality of the real as encountered in the Hegelian Preface. The theory of the divine right of kings and the theory of the *obedientia absoluta* are innocent and

innocuous compared with the terrible doctrine which *sanctifies the existing because it exists*. I am aware that it is considered narrow-minded and mistaken to accept that dictum as it stands and as it is construed throughout the entire text of the Preface. Hegel himself in fact is not only a long way from accepting all the consequences of his pronouncement: he has even endeavoured elsewhere to blunt the edge of it, to reduce it to an empty tautology, and to palliate his political conservatism by a logical distinction. Had he not done this, then we should have to do it for him. In reality the escape has its foundations in the system itself; unfortunately, however, this way of escape constitutes the basic flaw of the system. Empirical, apparent reality is not identical with true, rational reality. That is asserted in the *Logic*, and even more explicitly in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia*. Whether asserted or not, however, the system as it stands is simply the product of the continuous, the truly hopeless confusion of this twofold conception of the real. This philosophy derives its power from heaven and from earth. It is supported by the enthusiasm which the ideal calls forth in men, and upon the irresistibility and indispensability of the sensual and the real for mankind. In the *Logic* it elevates concepts to realities; and in the *Ethics* it gives realities rational value. From the spiritualism of its metaphysics, from the reality of pure concepts it escapes with one jump into the realism of its doctrine of the state; from the latter and the conceptuality of the real it leads one over in a trice into the Platonism of the *Logic*. 'What is real is rational; and what is rational is real.' This dictum epitomizes the entire duplicity of the system; it is the bridge which enables one to turn one's back, according to whim or need, either on empiricism or on idealism. This dictum, however, at the same time betrays where the main weight of the system lies at the present stage of its development. *It sinks down to the very bedrock of its metaphysics, to empirical reality*. After the hard work of the *Logic* in making the concepts concrete, it takes respite in the rewarding and pleasant business of idealizing comprehending existing, practical reality. In its logical part it is revolutionary; in its practical part, conservative. Thus, it was from the very beginning determined by the nature of the aesthetic intuition, from the energy of which the system had at an earlier date been created. That the absolute should be as much subject as substance was a practically worthless determination. The absolute, however, was above all beautiful, self-contained totality; all the tops of subjectivity had, therefore, to be continually bent back into the ground of the substantial; 'ought' and striving was always a mere self-stultifying pretence. Thus it lay, as mentioned, in the nature of the aesthetic basic intuition; thus it now emerges much more plainly and unequivocally in that the aesthetic intuition well nigh solidifies into an optimistic one in the field of ethics. Everywhere the *Philosophy of Law* becomes the commentator of the

system, divesting the latter at the same time of its liberalistic as well as ideological glory.

*The Philosophy of Law – in the entirety of its structure and content.* For the *Philosophy of Law* itself now proceeds to carry out with systematic thoroughness what is laid down in its Preface. It would, as Gans puts it, be indeed a perfidious procedure were critics to pick out that sentence in the Preface merely in order to hold it up to passers-by as a warning not to enter the work itself. In the face of such a procedure, the zealous disciple was able to brag; the trump he played was that 'the entire work was constructed from the one metal of freedom'.

In the first place Hegel's words do justify the assertion. The system of law, as it is defined in one of the first paragraphs, is 'the realm of realized freedom'. Accordingly, it is nothing other than freedom that is dealt with throughout the entire book. The dialectic of this concept determines the structure. Freedom in its 'immediate existence' results in the sphere of law. The demand that I should be free in myself in the subjective, is met by the sphere of morality. Freedom appears at last in its most concrete and complete form, in 'virtuousness' organizing itself into the state. Virtuousness is the 'idea' of freedom, is 'the concept of freedom which has become the present world and the nature of self-consciousness'. Yet the word 'freedom' is a coin whose exchange rate is constantly fluctuating. One's mentality alone determines the sense of this word. The version given it by Hegel becomes the betrayer of the fundamental weakness of his philosophy.

What first strikes the eye is the preponderance of the theoretical over the practical or, more exactly, the absorption of the willing spirit by the thinking spirit. *Will and freedom evaporate with Hegel into thinking and knowing.* Will, according to the psychological definition which forms the foundation of his entire system of freedom, is 'a particular way of thinking'. Similar to the manner in which for Neoplatonism all action is an imperfect cognition and practice merely the shadow of theory, will legitimates itself in absolute idealism only through its correspondence in character with, and its subordination to, cognizing reason. Will is a velleity of cognition, and it is only in the latter that will has its goal and its truth. Will, it is held, 'is only as thinking intelligence true, free will'; freedom is consequently identical with rationality; the principle of law, of morality, and of virtuousness is 'the self-consciousness which by thinking comprehends itself as an essence'. The Hegelian doctrine is in clear opposition to the Kantian. Hegel rightly objects that the concept of will set up by the latter doctrine is empty, formal and devoid of content; on the other hand the will that he knows lacks the form of willing itself: it is, strictly speaking, a will which *will not*.

The consequences of this psychological foundation immediately become apparent everywhere. The most remarkable of these consequences is the

reciprocal relation and the *quid pro quo* of the state and philosophy. *At the top absolute knowing and absolute virtuousness grow together, as do thinking and willing at the root.* Just as Prussia as the intelligence state *eo ipso* assumed to be the free state, just as the government of this state sought – probably more by instinct than by calculating sagacity – the alliance with absolute idealism, so the latter identified in a Platonic-Pythagorean manner the philosophical cosmos with the cosmos of the state; and Hegel set up a cartel relationship between the two powers, which perhaps finds a parallel only in similar phenomena in antiquity: in the politically active philosophers of Greater Greece, in the Stoics of Rome, and in the philosophical dilettantism of the Emperor Julian.

We have already considered the fact from other viewpoints. It was the consequence, already apparent in the early period of the system, of the twofold – now idealistic, now realistic – setting of the ‘reality’ striven for at all times and places that provided absolute idealism early on with a twofold stop, a twofold absolute. It would be necessary to read Hegel’s Berlin lectures and the *Encyclopaedia* together with the *Philosophy of Law* quite thoughtlessly in order to overlook the quite obvious relationship. The system still has or, rather, has now more than ever, two tops corresponding to the two faces with which it peers here at conceptual reality, there at real reality. Thus religion and science are represented in the second and third, as they were in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, as the culminating point of the philosophy of the spirit. The same conception is of course to be found where in personal lectures art and religion are made the special theme for consideration. Here the state appears everywhere as something limited and finite, and only religion, art and science appear as the ‘region of a higher, substantial truth’, so that it is only from the religious content, as pure truth existing in and for itself, that ‘moral life in empirical reality receives its sanction’. Yet, wherever the state becomes an independent theme, all the life-blood coursing in the arteries of this philosophy streams back in the reverse direction into this very same empirical reality. In the *Philosophy of Law*, and no less in the following *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, we find ourselves at the very point where we were in the *Jena Natural Law* before the completion of the *Encyclopaedia*. Indeed, the state is much more strongly, emphatically and persistently absolutized and apotheosized, now that the merely constructed state has been replaced by the existing Prussian state. ‘Atque haec est’ – cries Hobbes, having represented the development of the state from the natural condition of the war of all against all – ‘atque haec est generatio magni Leviathani vel, ut dignius loquar, mortalis Dei.’ One recalls these words of the English Restoration philosopher on reading the predication with which the Hegelian *Philosophy of Law* glorifies the state. There is not a single attribute of the absolute idea or of the spirit that knows itself in religion and

speculation which is not likewise attributed to the state. The state is equivalent in value and character to philosophy or, rather, since it exists at the same time sensually-temporally, it is *something more*. It is 'absolute, unmoved end-in-itself'. It is called 'the real God'. It is referred to as the 'divine existing in and for itself', and its 'absolute authority and majesty' are spoken of. The demand is made that it be worshipped as an earthly Godhead; and the assurance is given 'that all value man has, all spiritual reality, he has merely through the state'. To be sure, it is not forgotten amidst all this exuberance that this God is in fact a 'mortal' God, that he is but a copy of eternal reason, that he represents the divine idea 'as it is present upon earth'. It was just for the sake of this realism, however, that the young Hegel preferred the republican piety of the Romans and Greeks to the cosmopolitan-spiritualistic piety of the Christians. It is this very aspect of earthly and real existence which in truth contains even now the reason for the pathos with which the state is spoken about, a pathos which manifests itself all the more confidently, because it is not a merely imagined reality of the state that is spoken of, but because the picture of that state in which the philosopher is now permitted to live is being foisted into the general terms. And he is presently carried away to such an extent by this realistic pull that in the *Philosophy of Law* he well-nigh reverses the otherwise affirmed relationship between the state and religion. It is true that, like the state, religion also has absolute truth as its content, but merely in the form of intuition, feeling and idea. It can provide, therefore, only the foundation for the virtuousness representing itself in the state. The state is the higher and the more powerful; for it is 'divine will as *present* spirit developing into the real form and organization of the world'.

But with this precedence over religion, the state now comes all the more to be *on a par with speculation*. These two concepts are twin concepts; the identification of thinking and willing, of reason and freedom, combine with the ambiguity of the word 'reality' *to accord these concepts a completely equivalent treatment*. It is impossible to say definitely whether the state or whether speculation forms the actual cupola of the system. Both concepts are constantly interchanging, reverting alternately into each other. One view of the matter is covertly substituted for the other, so that we are compelled – rather as when a coin revolves rapidly about its own axis – to see heads and tails at the same time, both tops within each other, and both absolutes coinciding. The trick is simple. It consists in transferring the distinctive character of the state to speculation, and the distinctive character of the latter to the former. We are sufficiently well aware of how, in order not to lose the realistic character of the state during the jump into the ideality of speculation, the essence of the latter is put into the possession of the 'truly' real, into the absolute knowing that provides itself with all objectivity. But the contrary holds



true too. In order to transpose the concept of the state into that of speculation, the essence of the latter is postulated as being *reason and knowing*. However, it was precisely in the state of Prussia, with its perpetual vacillating, its constant making, expounding and repealing of laws, where at this very moment men knew least of all either what they ought to do, or what they wanted to do. Yet this as little affected the arrogance of the Prussian statesmen as it did the conceit of the philosopher. It was the bustle of legislative activity, together with the favour bestowed upon his philosophizing, which taught the philosopher to characterize the state as being, as it were, philosophy that had become perceptible and corporeally existing. Thus the state according to the *Philosophy of Law* is 'the manifest, clear-to-itself, substantial will, *which thinks itself and knows itself*, and which carries out that which it knows, doing so in so far as it knows it'. Thus, because of the common and like nature of knowing, the state and philosophy combine into a close alliance against and above religion. For the state, like philosophy, is what religion is not: *self-knowing* rationality; it 'knows what it wills', and, furthermore, it 'knows it in its generality as that which is thought'. In religion the absolute content remains at a standstill in the form of feeling and believing; in the principle of the state 'it belongs to the distinct thought'. It is first by its realistic, second by its intelligent nature that the state overtops religion. It is the one thing as well as the other which fuses it with speculation; for 'science too', it is held, 'has the same element of form as the state; it has the purpose of cognition, of knowing, that is to say, thought-of *objective* truth and rationality'.

But let us delve still deeper towards the roots of this invalidation of the practical spirit, and towards the consequent identification of the system of freedom with the system of knowledge! A gifted contemporary of Hegel, a man of action, who, it is true, was no adept at speculation but who for all this knew all the better how to pass a judgment, likened the Hegelian logic to the hanging gardens of Babylon; for in it abstract concepts were intertwined artificially into arabesques; yet these concepts were also devoid of life and of roots. It is the same with Hegel's practical philosophy as it is with his metaphysics. Even where he persuades himself that he is at his furthest and his deepest in the real, he is merely penetrating the latter's surface. His practical concepts, too, have the withered appearance of plants whose roots lie in but shallow soil. In the full depth of the individual life, in the concrete inwardness, lie the mighty impulse and matter of virtuousness. Into this rich mine of living reality absolute idealism disdains to descend. It appreciates the subjective only in so far as it has ceased to be a subjective and has rarefied into the general. Hence the weakening of willing to knowing; hence also *the neglect accorded to the subjective spiritual in general and, with it, to individuality*.

In this connection there is nothing more characteristic than the position

occupied by the concept of *morality* in the practical part of the system. It was, as we saw, merely for reasons of pedagogical convenience that the philosopher recognized for one moment the independent dignity of the moral. He can be found still later referring in isolated utterances to the infinite right of the self-determining personality; indeed, a compelling force is possessed by the few passages in which he thrusts forward to the 'inner central point of the individual', to 'the simple region of the right to subjective freedom', to the 'actual source of willing, resolving and doing'. Yet his philosophy is not at home in these regions. We know the accidental character with which morality had to be content in 'the system of virtuousness'. Since the encyclopaedic representation of the system, a separate chapter has, it is true, been devoted to morality; it occupies, significantly enough, the place formerly held by 'the subjective, or crime'. In other words, the merely accidental portent of morality has not so much disappeared as been more sharply accentuated by the scholastic arrangement. Placed midway between abstract law and objective virtuousness, morality represents nothing more than a *point passed through* in the development of freedom and rationality. By claiming to be something independent it would be, rather, in Hegel's view, something unjustified and immoral. The moral legitimates itself only by becoming tributary to the state, only by renouncing its infinite autonomy and the finality of its self-determination. What is otherwise termed moral philosophy is, consequently, dealt with in the second and third parts of the Hegelian *Ethics*. The second part deals only with that moment of morals which pertains to subjective self-determination, and it essentially presents only the inadequacy of this determination in the antinomies between intention and well-being, and between the good and conscience. It is not before the third part that a place is found for the positive doctrine of virtues and duties; however, these are not really dealt with there. The highest and worthiest subjective fares no better in Hegel's hands than the subjective in general. Morality is satisfied and put under, just as were critical understanding, the moment of determination and distinction, in the dialectic method. A seat and a vote are assigned in this philosophy only to what is of the nature of thought and to reality. But it is just these which it is unable to discover in morality. Morality, it is held, lacks in the first place 'the substantial of the concept', in the second place, 'the externally existing'. That means that the weakness with which morality remains afflicted for Hegel stems from his inability to deepen the Kantian conception of the same. Thus he dilutes conscience to knowing, and externalizes the good to the existing order of the state. But the task lay elsewhere. It lay in providing proof that morality has a depth within the inwardness of the subject, deeper than the depth of the thought, and that in the conscience this inwardness provides itself, simply through the concrete

reality of the individual, with a body, without which the objective virtuousness of the state would be neither objective nor virtuous.

Turning now, however, to the ultimate reason for this inability, the ultimate reason for this interplay between the conceptual and the externally existing: it is the classical ideal directed towards the beauty of sensuous appearance to which the depths of inwardness are sacrificed. It is *harmonism* which bears it forth beyond individualism. In the *Philosophy of Law* we find the very *culmination of the victory of the former over the latter, of the ancient over the modern, of the Graeco-Roman over the Germanic principle*.

The direct utilization, already familiar to us, of antique building materials for the construction of a modern state had now to be abandoned. Indeed, as the tendency of our philosopher always lay fundamentally in the direction of combining the objective Hellenic spirit with the conscious and inward spirit of modern times, we now encounter from time to time comments on the deficiencies of particularly the antique form of the state, and on the incompatibility of the latter with the requirements of present-day reality and present-day consciousness, comments whose beauty and clarity leave nothing to be desired. He proffers a splendid criticism of the Platonic doctrine of justice, which, in his view, is able to cope with the principle of independent particularity only by adopting with its quite substantial state a hostile and repudiating attitude towards it. Even more exhaustive is, on another occasion, his characterization of the spirit of our times contrasted with that of antiquity. The Greek state fell short of our requirements on two accounts. On the one hand it was the subjective peculiarity and the latter's private particularity which there find no scope for a development not detrimental to the whole; on the other hand there was still a higher need for freedom, which finds no satisfaction at all in the state, which finds it only prior to or subsequent to the state, in the generation of the good and the right inside one's own mind.

Strange! But however often such statements recur and however inclined the apologetics of the school may be to refer to them, they are in actual fact nothing more than a tribute that is paid to the modern consciousness and with which the philosopher buys for himself the freedom to continue living according to the law and customs and sentiments of the ancient republics. His sympathies obscure his insight. At no point in his doctrine is the pathos for the noble form of the Greek spirit preserved in greater freshness than in his *Ethics*. The manner in which the moral – this most characteristic product of the freer and deeper modern way of thinking – is in the *Philosophy of Law* still only apparently emancipated from politics I have already elaborated on. But it was the same in all the other pieces. Our philosopher of law *asserts*, indeed, that in the antique state the moment of individual independence did not receive its due; yet the very cause of this, the usurping majesty of the

state, remains unimpaired. He *asserts*, it is true, that particularity must be set loose and be able to develop more freely; but he says this in order to emphasize that it 'must again be brought entirely into accord with the general' and 'led back into the substantial'. He rises above the antique conception only to sink straight away back into it. He forms a conception of the right of individual independence; yet, filled with misgivings about the latter's preponderance, he hastily puts all the more load on the substantial side. At the end of it all, after so much recognition of and talk about subjective freedom, the 'divinity' of the state remains the subduer of everything; to belong to the state is declared the 'highest duty'; against the modern view of virtuousness as 'reflected doing from conscience and conviction', the antique view is designated quite simply as the 'true' one, and repeated assurances are given that 'the individual himself possess objectivity, truth and virtuousness only in so far as he is a member of the state'.

However, the full severity of this conception only becomes apparent in the *detailed exposition* of the state given in the *Philosophy of Law*. It is not merely the modern and antique *consciousness*, but modern *reality* too which is at variance with the latter. The state, as delineated by Hegel twenty years previously, was on the whole a homogeneous construction. Except for the government of the elders and of the priests, it was Hellenic material which at that time was poured into the Hellenic mould. The mould has remained; the material, however, is now being exchanged for that provided by the present. A crasser contrast, a more discordant theory is not conceivable. England's most recent great historian points out in one of his historical essays how ludicrous it was for Roman philosophers, men who lived under despots and dwelt in an empire which was the melting-pot of hundreds of peoples, to continue, notwithstanding that, to speak the language of the Greek philosophers and to descant in high-flown phrases upon the duty of sacrificing all to a fatherland to which they owed nought. To be sure, Roman imperialism was very different from Greek republicanism, Plato's times very different from Seneca's. Yet the difference was infinitesimal compared with that between the ancient and the modern form of the state. To attempt to introduce into the structure of the modern state the spirit which formed the soul of Platonic politics is more absurd than it is ludicrous; and the theory which attempts this is all the more erroneous and pernicious, the better it succeeds in artificially concealing the appearance of ludicrousness and absurdity. It is just this, however, which characterizes Hegel's theory. With traits of Lycurgian or Solonian, Platonic or Aristotelian politics are mixed traits of the state as it exists here and now, traits of present-day monarchism, and, to an even greater extent, the traits of the Restoration state and of the Prussian system of government. The beautiful statue of the antique state receives a constitutional or, rather, a black and white

coat of paint. We perceive a figure unmistakably modelled after the Prussian state that has come to a standstill half-way through its reforms; but it is illuminated by a light whose source lies in another and far-off time. Upon this barbarian shape the antique garb hangs oddly; its appearance resembles nothing more closely than those French tragedies of Louis XIV's time, in which Orestes enters the stage with rapier and wig, and Electra appears in the robes of a lady-in waiting.

Thus it is the *principles of life of the modern state in general* which are in the first place falsified and violated under the pretence of recognition. At one time, when he was outlining not the philosophical ideal but the practical project of a true German state, Hegel himself had paid very particular regard to these principles of life. He had on that occasion emphatically asserted that at the present time a powerful state able to fend for itself could be based only on complete individual freedom; as the essential ingredients of such a state he had named a supreme state authority culminating in a monarchy, and an assembly of representatives of the people cooperating with the government. Both appear again in the *Philosophy of Law*, but they are found there once more in the *falsifying light of a Hellenizing idealism*. Thus in the *Philosophy of Law*, too, a constitutionalism is constructed which, so it appears at first sight, is conceived in complete consonance with the modern need for subjective and individual liberty – a constitutionalism such as did not yet exist in Prussia but was merely being envisaged and striven after by the best. Indeed, this constitutionalism is surrounded by such markedly liberal provisions as, for instance, public-court proceedings and diet debates, and trials by jury – which were all acclaimed by Gans. But let us take a closer look at this. The honour which appears thus to have been paid to subjective freedom is in truth but nominal and an empty compliment. The liberality of these provisions is not so marked as the facility with which they are blunted and rendered ineffective. The fact that diet debates are public serves, in Hegel's view, about the same purpose as an official gazette; it is above all a corrective of public opinion, and it is a far cry to conceding the alternative possibility: that Parliament should be informed by public opinion. It is, furthermore, a means for learning to recognize and respect the talents, virtues and skills of state officials – and once again no mention is made of the alternative possibility. However, the diet itself is at bottom merely an ornament. Freedom does not bear the natural fruits of freedom. The institution of estates does not exist in order that through it the affairs of the state itself may be discussed and determined in the best way: on the contrary – a more insulting compliment is hardly conceivable – the estates are to be admitted to the work of the government only in order that 'the moment of *formal* freedom may come into its own right'. The arguments tendered in support of trials by jury fare no better. That the people should have a part in finding and

creating law by their own judgment and feeling – that is not the purpose of this institution. Nor is it its purpose to bring the living bedrock of law, the practical sense, the real spirit of the people, into a salutary mutual relationship with abstract law and the learned understanding of the jurists. What is here intended is – the wording is admirable – ‘that the right of subjective self-consciousness should be satisfied’. This is effected by the confession of the accused. The substitute for such a confession, since of course the criminal may deny his guilt, is the verdict of the jury. The significance of this verdict is ‘that the same is given from the soul of the criminal’. Thus once again ‘the right of subjective self-consciousness’ is compounded with and defrauded by means of mere formal recognition. Ingenious as the argumentation is, it is to an even greater degree sophistic: its essence lies in the transfer of the decision of conscience from one soul to another, in the good catholic externalization and objectification of the subjective-inward.

However, what is perhaps even more peculiar, as far as the theme and the treatment of the subjective is concerned, is the construction of *monarchism* in the Hegelian theory of the state. The strongest argument for the modern hereditary monarchy will be found in its origin in history; one vindicates it when one declares it to be the best-trying means for sustaining self-government of the peoples even in modern states. Yet the Hegelian deduction of this institution flies higher. It is the moment of subjectivity whose meaning for the sake of monarchism is suddenly stretched to the utmost. It is only as ‘subjectivity certain of itself, and as the abstract, in so far baseless self-determination of the will’ that the sovereignty of the state is said to be able to exist: thus the state must in the last resort taper off into the personality of the monarch at its apex. Indeed, the why and wherefore of this definition is not particularly obvious. Is not the subjective elsewhere in this system the negative that is to be abrogated and is self-abrogating? Is not the highest, in the whole as in the particular, at all times merely process and result, and by no means positing principle beginning in itself? A similar inconsistency can be found, however, in those rare places where Hegel hints at a personal God. We encountered such an inconsistency where, in the predicament of passing from logic into natural philosophy, the personality and the resolve of the absolute idea became a *deus ex machina*. Suffice it that the inconsistency of this definition immediately comes to light of its own accord. In actual fact: the higher the honour appears which is suddenly accorded to subjectivity in the form of personality, the more clearly does it reveal itself to be a mere matter of form. To such lengths does the philosopher at first go with his courtesies that for a while he turns the *order* of the system topsy turvy at the same time as the *principle*; that, contrary to the normal scheme of dialectic, he puts what is highest in the first rather than in the last member of the trichotomy. The ‘princely

authority' takes precedence of the 'government authority' and of the 'legislative' by the same right with which old-fashioned piety writes the name of God in capitals. By the same right and to the same purpose. For homage enough has now been paid to the principle of subjectivity: the heavy stress placed upon the latter contributes nothing to the real power of the monarch. Faced with the encroaching right of the substantial and with the 'explicated totality of the state', he recedes impotently into the background. It is 'with a perfected organization of the state merely a case of the apex of formal resolving'; the monarch is not the foundation of the edifice, or even its cupola, but at best the cross surmounting the latter; his entire significance lies in – 'merely saying "Yes" and in dotting the I's'. Hegel, as you see, converges here with the tried practice and theory of genuine constitutionalism; yet the source of this conception is in each case a completely different one. It is the very gravity with which the right of personal liberty and independence, Germanic individualism, asserts itself which, in the fully formed constitutional monarchy, reduces the importance of the sole personality at the head: *with Hegel this personality simply suffers the fate of the personal and individual in general*; it is sacrificed to harmonism, to the whole in its systematic shape, to the merely theoretically subjectivized substance. It is the foundation of the apparently liberal aspects of the Hegelian theory of the state which invariably betrays more than anything else the spiritualistic weakness and the aesthetic superficiality of Hegel's interest in freedom.

It is, however, to a much greater extent the *specific elements and factors of modern liberalism*, the entire spirit of contemporary opposition to the looming Restoration, against which the *Philosophy of Law* conducts a systematic campaign in the guise of anti-republican views and sentiments. On the one hand the antique ideal confutes the philosopher's estimation of the progressive tendencies of liberalism; and on the other hand the reality of the existing Prussian state confutes that ideal. It was, indeed, regrettable that the efforts of the opposition should have manifested themselves only in a feeble and vague half-heartedness, that in Württemberg in particular Hegel should have become acquainted with an assembly failing so grossly to recognize its true tasks. The views which he had formed there of the value of the press, of public opinion, of joint rule by the people he now virtually transferred to the conception of these things in general. With biting Catonism, he now inveighs against the spirit of mistrust and criticism towards the government, branding the latter 'the vanity of wanting to know better'. The people in so far as they are regarded as being in opposition to the government are in his eyes nothing less than the rabble. Public opinion, it is true, is for him on the one hand 'the quintessence of the eternal, substantial principles of justice'; however, it is only where *prevailing* reality is concerned that reality and idea become for him one; public opinion and public authority are

measured with different yardsticks; for him public opinion as such is far from being rational; in its factual appearance it is better described as mere 'contingency of supposing and judging'. Freedom of the press, the most powerful lever of all progress, the best guarantor of political freedom, is regarded by him as a dispensable luxury beside the freedom and openness of debates in the assembly of estates; it serves the 'satisfaction of the tingling urge to have, and to have had, one's say'. The censorious wisdom of the philosopher blusters on in the same tone. Only the uncultured indulge in reasoning and fault finding; for it is easy to find fault, but difficult to recognize the good and the inner necessity therein; to take the negative as starting point, to place mistrust first, and thence cunningly to devise dams which in order to be effective only require opposing dams – all this characterizes, as far as thought is concerned, negative understanding and, as far as mentality is concerned, the outlook of the rabble etc. As though all opposition were merely a case of wanting to *know* better rather than wanting to *do* better! As though it were not the case that all reform, however positive may be the foundations on which it rests, must start out in the first instance from censure and criticism! With such optimism Stein would certainly never have reformed the Prussian state; and it was in fact by possessing an ample portion of that 'negative understanding' and 'rabble mentality' that he and other great statesmen were able to perform unforgettable services for their fatherland when dealing with the maladministration and the threatening practical dangers harboured within it.

However, it is this very state *reformed* by Stein which now at a time of political impotence is absolutized by Hegel. Thus for him patriotic sentiment and political sense merge with, and become indistinguishable from, uncritical faith and oppositionless loyalty. In this state there exist freedom of property, freedom of occupation and self-government of the lower strata. In accordance with the measure of the official *status quo*, because and in so far as all this has come into being in the Prussian state through Stein's reform, it is constructed from the principle of justified subjectivity. And again, where these things are incomplete, where a quite contradictory spirit holds sway in the upper strata, there the flaws are concealed beneath the mask of the antique state. The rule of Prussian officials is Platonized into the rule of the 'best' and the 'knowledgeable'. The police system and the system of persecution prevailing in Prussia appear in the light of that magnificent energy by which the Roman state subjected its citizens to its sway in order to make them, as best they were able, free. The entire gravity of the philosophical consciousness merges in this point with the entire arrogance and irritability of the mentality of the public official. The governmental, the government-addicted mentality of Hegel combines with his sympathy for the Doric and Roman conception of the state to accord the state authority the widest and most



questionable rights. In spite of all the polemics against the Fichtean police state in which 'everything runs to rule', the Hegelian freedom state is much worse than the latter: it is an extenuating construction of police desires as these actually existed in Prussia. The reproach levelled against Kant by Hegel that the former's moral philosophy is compelled to elevate that which is empirically determined in contradiction to its essence to an absolute, this reproach, together with all the hard words about immorality and sophism accompanying it, applies equally to a doctrine which absolutizes the entire system of a particular form of state and government under the name of the system of morality, freedom and reason. Even Aristotle when he praises true monarchy occasionally adapts his conception of the state to the Macedonianism that had come to power in Greece; yet in the literature of philosophy there is no other instance of such a comprehensive and uninhibited idealization of existing political reality as occurs in the Hegelian *Philosophy of Law*. As has rightly been pointed out, it is only on rare occasions, particularly in connection with the democratic defence system in Prussia, that our systematist is too caught up in his former conceptions to be able to find his way into the freer spirit of the new state. This philosophy of the state, by the way, contains all that is typical of the Prussian state of 1821. There, side by side, are the liberal ideas and the liberal institutions, together with the unyielding conceit of over-clever officialdom and the stubborn remnants of the old absolutism. Above all, here as there, we find the same uncertain prospect of a future national assembly. The promise of a constitution had been made; it was not decided whether to fulfil or rescind this promise. The same is true of the Hegelian doctrine. Reduced to something merely formal, the diet of estates is half set up and half taken down. Constitutionalism is vindicated, yet at the same time a hint is given that it is considered dispensable and that one is resigned to its absence: the doctrine is as well suited to the year 1821 as to the year 1830.

A short span of time indeed for a system which otherwise talks at every turn of 'eternal reason' and 'absolute knowing', and which hears of nothing less willingly than modesty of knowing. The consequence, however, is inescapable. To absolutize the transient is directly tantamount to subjecting oneself to transience. The Hegelian philosophy of law itself provides *proof of its own, and the entire system's, temporal limitation and unsoundness*.

That a philosophy with the watchword 'What is real is rational', and with the tendency to comprehend a specific, existing situation of the state, can have but temporal validity is in itself clear. That in the double cult of the real and the conceptual, which runs with admirable ambiguity through the entire system, the weight of the real must finally gain preponderance has become everywhere evident. That, accordingly, also the claim to possess pure and absolute truth resolves into the confession that this

truth is in fact a temporally determined one – that we can quite simply let Hegel himself tell us. We return from the paragraphs of the *Philosophy of Law* to its Preface. ‘To comprehend what is’, the preface says, ‘is the task of philosophy. As far as the individual is concerned, each is in any case the child of his age; thus philosophy too is its age apprehended in thought. It is just as foolish to suppose that any philosophy can pass beyond its present world as it is to suppose that an individual can outleap his own age.’ ‘Philosophy always comes too late to teach how the world should be. As the thought of the world it appears only after reality has completed its process of formation and taken final shape. When philosophy paints in sombre colours, then a figure in life has become old, and with sombre colours it cannot be rejuvenated, only recognized; the owl of Minerva starts its flight only at the fall of dusk.’ Thus runs the naive self-confession of absolute idealism that it is in fact *not* absolute. It is the thoughtless antistrophe to the epilogue of phenomenology. A bungler indeed in the understanding and use of the Hegelian dialectic would be he who was unable to conceal with the aid of its logic the double bottom which thus appears in this philosophy, as effectively as was done through the distinction of the true and contingent real in the case of the contradiction of its empirical and idealistic nature. Let us leave this exercise to the school, if it does not find the simple repetition of thoughtlessness more convenient still. Indeed, logic, too, has already shown us its independence of empirical reality and of the temporal form of life; our task lies not in concealing, but in revealing.

It lies furthermore in the general search for *the permanent in the transient*. Even the philosophy of law has, despite its temporal determination, an enduring core. Even with this enduring core, it is but a particularly intelligible commentary on the whole system.

It is only in the projection of the concept, it is true, and in the subordination to the intuition of beautiful concord that in the Hegelian state freedom, the moment of subjectivity and individuality come into their own. Hegel descends into the depths of these moments only to ascend again immediately to the surface of beautiful appearance and to the ether of thought. Even so traces of subjective vitality remain unobliterated in his portrayal of the state. They become logicized and aestheticized into the ubiquitous concepts of *arrangement* and *organization*. Even before the form of the system at the level of reflection was finished, the ideal of life became intertwined with the ideal of beauty and totality. In a plastically tangible form the value of this intuition thrusts itself once more to the fore in the sketch of the state. Thus, whatever injustice was done to the mentality, the conscience, and all the powers of inwardness – this injustice is to some extent made good by the concept of the *organic*, and to a certain degree movement and life are restored to the rigid form of the Hegelian state. From this transformation of the inward and free

into a concept, an aesthetically coloured concept, some life flows back into the veins of the otherwise dead body of virtuousness. The motives were more correct which earlier on had induced Hegel to forbid the state authority, such as was demanded by him for a new German Reich, all interference in the free activity of the people themselves; some of this vitality at least is still preserved at this time; to some extent at least the substantial mightiness of the state is moderated by the dialectic of the concept of organism. The Hegelian metaphysics was entirely based on the thought that 'All that is, is mediate'; his philosophy of law also characterizes the constitution of the state as being in essence 'a system of mediation'. With this result of logic the antique portrayal of the state again acquires something of the Germanic form of the state. It acquires it in a roundabout way, it is true, and from above; it acquires it, moreover, *per accidens*: nevertheless, in this way the need for freedom and self-government is accorded a kind of recognition. The principal merit and the real value of the Hegelian constitutional law lie in the salvation of the concept of the organic from the rigid absolutism of the antique, in particular the Roman, state, and to a still greater degree, from the atomism and mechanism of the French state. What in this connection we picked out and praised from the essay on the Württemberg Estates we discover again in the *Philosophy of Law* and, more particularly, in its Appendices. According to the latter the state is not something 'made'. Nor, it is true, is it conceived as a creation of living freedom, but nevertheless as an organic order which is above all making because it posits and arranges itself, and brings itself back out of the arrangement to unity. The state can be as little governed from above and from the abstract general as it can be made from thence. It can be neither put together from the atomistically splintered mass nor subjected to a centralizing rule. Its constitution must instead be linked to the arrangement actually existing among the people; it must be ruled concretely from beneath, where civil life is concrete; the real strength of states lies in the communes; it is in estates that civil life arranges itself: this civil arrangement must be elevated into the political sphere, and the government must be allowed to grow organically from the organic elements of the state.

But it is not merely in this version of the concept of the state that much profound truth is contained. The spirit of *true political practice* is also encountered, though in a peculiar guise, in Hegel's philosophy of law. Only a scholastic distortion of truly living cognition revealed itself to us in the absolute method of the Hegelian logic. This living cognition which mediates aesthetically between intuition and concept has corresponding to it in the sphere of practice a doing which mediates in a like manner. Ethical-political wisdom, too, consists in nothing other than the ability to keep ideas constantly in mind while at the same time meeting individual circumstances, all the conditions and needs of reality. In a

partly violent and partly sophistic manner the Hegelian logic combined doing and content of understanding with doing and content of intuition. An equally scholastic picture is drawn of the essence of true politics by Hegel's doctrine of the state. The moments of the true, statesmanlike mode of acting appear with him only disjointedly and alternately, and are then brought together again only by violence and cunning. Now he directs his polemics against all individualizing pragmatism, against political reasoning motivated 'by aims, reasons and considerations of utility'; it is the nature of his logic which causes him to postulate that merely 'the self-determination of the concept' is to decide. What he now requires of the practician – to supplement and correct this practical panlogism – is once again the recognition of the real, the investigation of the concrete and the individual. 'What is real is rational; what is rational is real' – this hard formula which opens the sluice gates to all forms of sophistry and tyranny is the ultimate and supreme means by which the practice of the idea is to be reconciled with the practice of the routine. However this may be, in this hither and thither and in this motley nothing less than the same meaning is concealed as that which constantly asks the true statesman to mediate between the real and the rational, the finite circumstances and the great principles, between reasons and the reason, and between the useful and the unconditional. Virtuous conduct, too, putting it another way, is, like the cognition of truth, a living art. To have changed this art into a doctrine, and the method into a system, is the greatness and the error of the Hegelian philosophy. It itself, however, constantly expresses a clear consciousness of the living spirits which it imagines it can captivate in doctrinarian apriorism. The absolute theory of virtuousness repeatedly invokes the testimony of 'truly healthy human sense'. In the theoretical sphere, 'rational viewing', by reason of its allegedly concrete character, is supposed to correspond to 'contemplative natural viewing'; in the practical sphere, it is supposed to correspond to a 'practical sense' guided by ideas. The Hegelian logic and natural philosophy refer to Goethe. Hegelian politics could refer to men like Stein and Wilhelm von Humboldt – if it did not prefer to make peace with the state of the Restoration and common cause with the statesmen of Aachen, Karlsbad and Vienna!

## **Conclusion**

Hegel lectured for the last time on the philosophy of history in the winter of 1830–1. The times were such as might well have shaken the belief that in our fatherland all things were as they should be. Revolution had knocked once more upon the doors of history, which the policy of the Restoration had closed. On France's eruptive soil the order of things set

up by the Cabinets of Europe had crumbled overnight; the glowing ashes were strewn out far beyond the boundaries of France; in our fatherland, too, the upheaval which had brought about the fall of the Bourbons was felt in single shocks. Panic terror seized the congress politicians; and a boundless consternation took possession of the philosopher of the Restoration. Perhaps some foreboding crept upon him that this new world-movement, if it should gain further ground, would put out of joint not only the state, but also a system: the system of absolute idealism. This time, however, the revolution assumed milder forms; both here and over there the arts of accommodation, propitiation and acquiescence were being practised; the new French citizen-monarchy, too, was restorationist and peaceable; it was once again possible to evade and conciliate. This was done by the German statesmen – and by the philosopher, too.

Resolved not to permit his circles to be disturbed, Hegel clung all the more firmly to his principles and to Prussia, with her happy, proper monarchist constitution. The conclusion of his lectures bears all too clearly traces of the endeavour to overcome the fear of the onward surging course of events by the definitive comprehension of history. Thus he garbles the events of the recent past. It is not the sins of the Restoration, but the sins of liberalism for which France has atoned with her July revolution. Freed from this principle, the principle which ascribes validity to atomistic individual wills, the German state is beyond the reach of the revolutionary crises which had been the fate of France. Here the great principles of the freedom of property and of person have become reality: every citizen, provided he possesses the required knowledge and skill, participates in the government, which resides in the realm of public officials; and while the personal decision of the monarch is paramount, it is in fact the best and the knowledgeable who govern.

But fear for the threatened peace of the world leaves the philosopher without peace of mind. Indeed, the spirit of unrest seems to be about to triumph even in conservative England – even in the country which had been able to uphold its constitution unshaken throughout the storms of the first French revolution! ‘Reform’, cry Russell’s friends, ‘in order to preserve!’ In feverish excitement the nation is hammering at the gates of Parliament; it means to wrest from the stubbornly resisting Tories – if necessary, with violence – their assent to a reform of Parliament. In view of this agitation, our philosopher of history once more turns his hand to journalism. He writes in the Prussian gazette his last essay: ‘A critique of the English Reform Bill’.

If the motive for this essay is concern at the way in which the conditions of the Restoration were being shaken, its attitude is a combination of a theoretician’s super-cleverness with a Prussian official’s conceit. It is not that Hegel disapproved of the Reform Bill’s aims or provisions; rather he perceives the danger in reforming as such. The English state, if we

are to believe the German philosopher, more than any other state is in a condition which calls for improvement, but is less able to bear improving than any other. With a highly creditable knowledge of details, he gives prominence to the real shortcomings in the English system. We may certainly concur with the critic in what he has to say on, for instance, primogeniture, the abuse of benefices and other privileges, on the status of the Church of England, on misgovernment in Ireland and the social and economic consequences thereof. We shall be as little willing as Hegel to defend that which is best left to the admiration of antique collectors: the rust of centuries which encrusts and distorts the institutions of England. We may concede that the English constitution is 'an aggregate of positive decrees devoid of inner cohesion', and we may hold that the more systematic character and sharper outlines of modern constitutions represent at least theoretically an advance. Yet, it is not possible to conceive an appraisal of the British state more biassed than this one, which sees only its shadowy sides and simply ignores the abundance of liberal forces which hold sway therein. Again it becomes clear that the living process of freedom means nothing to our philosopher, that the systematism of the concept and the objectively constituted, ordered freedom – however unfree, bureaucratic, and upheld by police authority – mean everything to him. What value can be attached to his construction of constitutionalism and his occasional extolling of self-government now becomes clear. Nowhere else has the principle of self-government been realized on so broad a scale, with such splendour and yet with such moderation; and nowhere else have the blessings of self-government proved their value so well, as in the parliamentarianism of the British. Yet in Hegel's view this parliamentarianism is the incarnation of political corruption and irrationality. It is the 'pomp and hubbub of formal freedom' which preclude genuine freedom and reflection on it. In the guise of freedom a self-seeking and covetous oligarchy has set itself up and is playing into the hands of the worst kind of democratism. Positive privileges, traditional sectional interests and behind all this the lack of understanding on the part of the mass and the passions of the rabble – these are the elements which make up the life of the English constitution. All the biassed narrow-mindedness, all the violent ill-temper which typify the opinions of political parties about their rivals find vent in Hegel's opinion of the British Parliament. Prussian bureaucracy, allied with German idealism, takes up arms against the English form of the state and against the practical-empirical reasoning of Francis Bacon's countrymen. Hegel speaks of the fundamental institute of English freedom in the same way as the Brandenburg Junker spoke of the 'nation of shopkeepers'. He is not content with painting in glaring colours the excitement and intrigues at the elections and the existing system of bribery; in his eyes even parliamentary debates and speeches are but a poor substitute for the

wisdom that emanates from the conference table and filing cabinets. Most of this assembly's time is occupied with statements by members on their personal positions; and these members put forward their views not as men with a job to do, but as privileged individuals and speakers. The eloquence of these speakers is 'garrulity surfeit with self-ostentation'; only the sober lectures of a man like the Duke of Wellington – who as a Tory statesman is indeed a man after our critic's heart – find favour in Hegel's eyes. The refrain accompanying all this bad-tempered eructing is the exuberant laudation of the German and Prussian state. Here the work is already completed which in England has yet to be done. Here the great spirit, the wisdom and love of justice of the princes and the unobtrusive influence of several centuries' scientific training have brought about that which the British nation has been unable to obtain from its Parliament. What is mainly responsible for Britain's backwardness compared with the civilized states on the Continent is the weakness of the monarchical authority. Jealousy of the Crown's power is 'the most stubborn of English prejudices'. Thus even the attempted reform will probably lead all the sooner to ruin. Should, that is, the bill being at present disputed open the way into Parliament to principles opposed to the present system, then the struggle would become all the more dangerous for there being no central, higher power to mediate between and restrain the interests of positive privilege and the demands for a more real freedom. It is only through governmental power that the rational principles of justice and freedom can be successfully realized. In England power is in the hands of the privileged class; consequently the advocates of those more correct principles can only come forward as an opposition to the government and the existing order of things. These principles will for this very reason be able to assert themselves not in their concrete, practical truth and application as they have done in Germany, but in the dangerous form of the French abstraction. The realization of these reforms runs counter to the principle of the English state; they can hardly be carried out without seriously shaking the structure of society and of the state.

It would serve no useful purpose to refute the reasoning of this self-satisfied and fearful bureaucracy. It was not long before history itself proved that these pessimistic prophecies about foreign countries were as unfounded as the idealizing conception of conditions under the Restoration in the fatherland. Yet Hegel was to live to see neither the one nor the other. It was at this very moment that cholera broke out for the first time in our part of the world to frighten the politically terrified spirits with new terrors. It rapt the philosopher, too, from the midst of his work: he died on the anniversary of Leibniz's death, on 14th November 1831.

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## **The dialectic and the principle of contradiction<sup>1</sup>**

**(1871)**

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C. L. Michelet

When Hegel condescended on one occasion to defend himself against some quite inferior attacks, to wit, of Catholic priests and other persons, this hero of science compared himself to the hero of war of the Prussian state, Frederick II, who said to one of his generals after the battle of Kunnersdorf: 'Just see, with such a rabble I have to scuffle!' It was not given to Hegel to have an opponent of equal rank to contend with, such as Plato found in Aristotle or Fichte in Schelling. The feet of those who were to carry him out failed to come. Under the cross-fire of the pigmies which creep up to him, he stands unhurt and unshaken, like a rock in the roaring sea. And neither the public reputation of the one nor the obscurity of the other – both internally worthless – nor least of all the potent disfavour of the governing class could shake his fame, though the latter may have helped very much to confine to narrower limits for a time the appreciation of this hero, and even the effectiveness of his labours, by patronizing his adversaries.

Herr v. Hartmann has 'never come into personal contact with any teacher of philosophy' (Pref, p. iii). Nevertheless he ventures, 'far from the strife of philosophical schools', upon a very detailed critique of the Hegelian dialectic, and is not afraid merely to repeat what has been said before, though other opponents – Trendelenburg to begin with – spring forth by scores like mushrooms. Because they have not yet sufficiently killed the common enemy – as it certainly appears to the author – he feels himself the man to enter the lists again, to break again a lance, and as a brave champion to make an end with 'the giddy sham that was to rise over Kant's tomb' (p. 23). If others, as Mr Bergmann, for instance, repeating merely Trendelenburg's assertion, call the philosophical systems after Kant an 'intoxication', it may be said that the expression 'giddy' is



no very original one, inasmuch as giddiness is commonly the first natural consequence of intoxication. But although our author does not feel giddy at the apprehension 'that the present undertaking might appear presuming', yet he wishes to 'call to mind that there is no other piety towards the heroes of science' than to 'examine their productions more carefully than anybody else's' (p. v). Whereupon we have only to remark that if but one-fourth of what Hegel is reproached with be true – if indeed Mr Hartmann could with good reason point out in the dialectic 'crack-brained statements' (pp. 52–4), 'sophisms' (pp. 71, 75), 'tricks' (p. 79), 'hushing of facts' (pp. 80–1) – then Hegel would not be the hero at all whom even his assailant (his most embittered animosities notwithstanding) wishes and is obliged to acknowledge him to be. By this, of course, the 'piety' displayed before comes down to the level of a mere conversational phrase. Still it must be acknowledged that Mr Hartmann does not ignore altogether the dialectic method as others have done in their attacks, but magnanimously stoops to an ample refutation of it.

In this attempt, the confession of Weisse – himself an opponent of Hegel – that 'Hegel's only achievement' is 'the invention of the true method' proves very offensive to our author (p. iii). For, if this were the case, the calamity, so deplorable to our author, will happen that 'all attacks against the Hegelian philosophy and logic are lost for the critic of the dialectic method', and consequently even his own book would have to find its way into the waste-basket. 'For it might well be that this instrument is still at this moment waiting for the artist who will make the proper use of it.' To keep off such a horror, Herr v. Hartmann declines to follow Weisse (who rejected only the results of Hegel's dialectic) in taking hold of the nag by the tail. He undertakes, on the contrary, to seize the bull by its horns in 'assigning to the results of Hegel's philosophy (aside from the method by which they have been gained) a necessary place in the development of philosophy'. *Principiis obsta* is his motto. Yet no! at p. 119 Mr Hartmann changes his mind, and will allow that necessary place not only to the principle results of Hegelian philosophy, but also to its 'fundamental principles'. What a contradiction! as the fundamental principles can be nothing else than the method, the way of gaining the results.

The whole of the present book is divided into two parts, one historical (pp. 1–34) and the other polemical (pp. 35–124), which we will now pass under review.

## I

In the first part, the author's attempts are designed to tear Hegel out from the connection of the history of philosophy – to isolate him. Of

course; for if 'Hegel's assertion, that by his method merely the form of exact science and perfection was given to that which the majority of great philosophers attempted before with more or less consciousness', happened to be true, our author's whole enterprise would again fall to the ground. For he himself seems not to be equal to the Herculean task of impeaching the entire gallery of heroes of science with tolerable swindling or underhand tricks. And so he endeavours merely to show in this most concise outline of the history of philosophy, which manifests an uncommonly deficient knowledge of it, and particularly great ignorance of its original, that Hegel's predecessors were driving with their dialectic at quite a different thing from what Hegel purposed with his. Even when he is not able to efface the quite obvious close relation between Hegel and three or four other philosophers, i.e. Heraklitus, Plato, Proklus, and Nicolas Cusanus: he nevertheless tries now this shift, and then some other, to separate Hegel also from these. Let us briefly go over the four.

Heraklitus, says our author, 'considers the process as the principle thing'. Very true! Of this principle, Mr Hartmann will admit only that 'every change is a transition of one condition or state into its opposite'; but agrees with Aristotle's objection, that 'Heraklitus violated the principle of contradiction when he asserted that everything has always the opposite in it, and that everything *is* and *is not* at the same time'; and thinks most wisely, squinting and hinting at Hegel, that 'the outgrowths of this abortion do not offer any support to the products of our century which require the highest mental maturity'. Now here only the length of time is represented to separate Heraklitus and Hegel, as the contents will by no means allow of such a separation. But with this Mr Hartmann has laid bare the very centre of his battery of attack against Hegel. For he is ready to admit that antitheses change into each other, but not that one is contained in the other, because this would exclude the principle of contradiction. As if antitheses could pass into each other without being developed from each other. As if not also the identity of antitheses expressed in this could preserve their difference, and thus not at all conflict with the principle of contradiction. Mr Hartmann, as it appears, is a great deal bolder than even Mr Bergmann, who allots to German philosophy the prodigious task of denying that the understanding is governed by logical laws; or what with Mr Bergmann manifests itself only as a suspicion has become a certainty with Mr Hartmann.

Even where the author must admit that Heraklitus is completely a dialectician in the Hegelian sense, he grudges Hegel's agreement with Plato, and wants therefore to distinguish essentially Plato's dialectic from Hegel's both in substance and language. 'Plato denies', it says on p. 8, 'that an idea might by itself pass into another, or that it might contain antitheses at the same time and in the same relation. Now it is but these latter two points that separate Hegel's dialectic from sound common

sense.' Against this pert assertion stands, however, according to the author's own confession, at least *one* passage in Plato over which he wishes to get by the following turn: Hegel, to identify his dialectic with Plato's, 'rests on a single obscure and disputed passage of the *Sophist*, which, in whatever way you may construe it grammatically, will at any rate exclude the Hegelian interpretation' (*Soph.*, p. 259). It is incredible that after my correspondence with the author on this passage, it should still appear to him obscure and doubtful, which it never has been or can be to anyone possessing even a fair knowledge of Greek. I therefore decline to show him also in its proper light the former passage of the *Sophist*, about which he seems to ask also my opinion in his last letter; and merely say that it does not depend upon one passage in Plato, but upon his whole dialectic in connection, to furnish the sun-clear proof that Plato 'pronounces to be the true dialectic' the same which Hegel has in mind. According to Plato, dialectic is no longer, as with Heraklitus, the Process of the sensuous things, but of the Ideas in and for themselves. And as the ideas are themselves the divine, they – or the idea (λόγος) – intermingle and pass through each other (δι' αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτά); they are also in the same respect the One in which they are the other (ὅταν τις φῇ ταῦτόν ὃν ἕτερον ἐχέειν καὶ κατ' ἐχέειν ὃ φησι τούτων πεπονθέναι πότερον). Thus, for instance, the One is the infinite Many because each is ONE; and for this reason has two parts, BEING and ONE; each part again has two others, and so on *ad infinitum*. But inasmuch as One is *One*, it has conversely not many parts, because in this case it would be *Many* and not *One*; and as infinitely small, it is Nothing. Thus the One is in the same respect One and Many, Nothing and the Infinite. At the same time the two are not in the same way (ὁμοίως) identical. For Being and Nothing, One and Many, form also an absolute antithesis. In this way Plato does not sin against the principle of contradiction and just as little does Hegel, as they do justice both to the antithesis and to the unity. But the unity would, however, be outflanked by the antithesis in case we held asunder the antitheses in such a manner as to predicate them of One thing only in some way or other (ἀμῇ γέ πη): as in calling Six great against Four and small against Eight; or Socrates one of Seven, but Many by his parts. This is what Plato and Hegel term prating and the work of a tyro, while the author (p. 62) pronounces this very thing true dialectic. In the application of the ideas to sensuous things the separation and final disjunction of opposites takes place, while in their state of pure being-in-itself they change into each other. Yet wherever in the sphere of the Finite the Infinite as a resemblance to the Ideas is bursting through, there will also exist an intermingling of ideas: so nature is Becoming, Life, Activity, because Being and Non-being are united in her inseparably; so music, virtue, are harmony and beauty, because in them the Definite and the Indefinite (ἄπειρον and πέρας) blend. These

are Plato's own words, taken faithfully from the *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, *Philebus* and other dialogues. And the thorough knowledge of the Platonic dialectic depends upon neither the interpreting ingenuity of a model professor of philology nor the impotency of an amateur-bungler. Thus even Mr Hartmann does not wish to deny the possibility 'that already Plato had before his mind as a distant ideal the identification of opposites in the Hegelian sense' (p. 7). This is perfectly sufficient for us, and we reject most emphatically in Plato's name the ignoble motive of indolence imputed to him.

To alienate Proklus from Hegel, and to counterpoise the undeniable development of the world out of the conception of the *ἐν* in Proklus, Zeller is called to aid, 'who himself arisen from the Hegelian school, deserted it in later times'. This incident, instead of serving his purpose, should have been the very thing to put Mr Hartmann on his guard against Zeller. Zeller accuses Proklus of scholasticism, and 'sterile and monotonous formalism' (p. 12). Whereby it is only astonishing, as the same reproach has been made against Hegel, that Mr Hartmann has not seen even in this a sort of a resemblance between Proklus and Hegel. So greatly Mr Hartmann mistakes the advantage offered to him by Mr Zeller's weapons and those of other predecessors; but he does not want to see similarity at any rate, because he is bent upon setting Proklus and Hegel at variance.

On Nicolas Cusanus' views, whom Hegel strangely enough appears not to have known, he says on p. 17: 'If this doctrine has in its discrimination between *reason* and *intellect*, and the principle of the *coincidentia contrariorum*, the greatest similarity to Hegel, it is still essentially distinguished from it both by the highest stage placed above the intellect and by the impotent infinite process of ascent': which two deviations do not lessen at all the similarity of the dialectic of the two.

Then Mr Hartmann finds a still greater resemblance to Hegel in GIORDANO BRUNO (p. 18), inasmuch as the latter set forth with special emphasis that only in God himself are all antitheses at the same time and without any difference of time united; that, on the contrary, in all worldly things perfection consisted only in this, that each and every thing can and must in the course of time become each and everything else. Bruno has also pronounced as 'the peculiar and deepest secret of art' to 'develop from the point of union also its antithesis'. It is very droll, of course, how there should still exist 'the enormous difference between the two', that, with Bruno, 'the *philosopher* has to develop the idea out of its antithesis, but with Hegel the idea *itself*'. To which we have only to reply that the philosopher would act very wrongly if he performed this development when the idea refused to do it itself. By the way of consolation, we may assure Mr Hartmann that in this the philosopher and the idea go hand in hand; that the idea is but the personified philosopher. And thus in his

'short description of the dialectic method' he himself paints it quite correctly in this way: 'The self-movement of the idea is just as much the objective course of the thing itself as it is the thinking process in the philosopher's head' (p. 37).

The exposition, finally, of the philosophical systems of Kant, Fichte and Schelling as being perfectly separated from the Hegelian dialectic moreover bears testimony of the greatest ignorance of this part also of the history of philosophy, as everybody who has lived through it, or has restored it to new life within himself by study, will have seen also before his very eyes the gradual growth of the Hegelian dialectic from those standpoints. By which, of course, we do not mean to deny that Hegel added to it the keystone of perfection by his own efforts – the essential point which our author either would not or could not appreciate. We will ask him, however, if he is unable to find 'something of Hegel's dialectic principles' in Kant's assertion that the first two categories of each class – thus, for instance, Reality and Negation – are the opposites united in the third category, Limitation.

While Kant presents the result of this dialectic as an assertion merely without attempting to deduce it, Fichte undertakes this, as the author states it himself by quoting Fichte's words, as follows (p. 25): 'We must ask ourselves how can A and –A, Being and Non-being, Reality and Negation, be thought together without annihilating and cancelling each other?' Fichte finding the solution, like Kant, in the idea of Limitation, has almost given Hegel his cue, who says, in the same way, that, in the Becoming, Being and Non-being are both preserved (i.e. *not* annihilated) and cancelled. Neither of these philosophers, however, thinks that he has cancelled by this the principle of contradiction. Mr Hartmann alone sees this in it, but he charges only Hegel with it (p. 78). But while Mr Hartmann pretends to see in Fichte only sober and healthy understanding, and no superabundance of reason, he should have been more considerate in lavishing praise on him at Hegel's expense, as the author seems to agree with Herbart's opinion, who throws Fichte very much in the same category with his successors; this should also have made Mr Bergmann more considerate before giving himself over to the extravagancies of the intellectual intuition. Herbart's words are these: 'Fichte retained the unthinkable (*undenkbaren*) thought; he gave it authority by the assumption of an intellectual intuition: and thus one of the greatest thinkers that ever existed became the originator of a visionary movement which thereafter, when it chose for its central point the so-called absolute identity, banished philosophy from a wide circle, because one did not want to lose one's reason about the intellectual intuition.' Such classical sobriety Hegel's two opposers, to which we have referred hitherto, ought to have taken for an example!

At the close of this part Mr Hartmann wants to absolve also Schelling,

the originator of the absolute identity, from any community with Hegel, in saying: 'When he speaks of the identity of opposites, it is only a misuse of the word; for he does not at all mean by it Oneness or Sameness, but organic unity' (pp. 29–30). Now this is the very thing that Hegel means too. And the author is naive enough to admit this in part: 'Hegel, however, uses, as we shall see, the word "Identity" sometimes in Schelling's, sometimes in its proper (Aristotelian) meaning, producing thereby unlimited confusion.' Is it possible to speak more unreasonably about this modern Aristotle? And does the 'unlimited confusion' not lie rather in Mr Hartmann's brain? As in the original system Schelling's identity of the Infinite and the Finite, the Universal and the Particular, the Essence and the Form, the Ideal and the Real conveyed too undeniably the fusion of the opposites, Mr Hartmann contents himself with attempting to demonstrate the contradistinction between Schelling and Hegel by the polemic of New-Schellingism against the dialectic method; which, of course, is not too difficult an undertaking after all, and affords an extremely easy triumph. 'So far', he exclaims pathetically, 'was the only contemporary who was Hegel's peer from allowing himself to be dazzled by his dialectic' (p. 31). But it is a mistake of Mr Hartmann's to place this polemic of Schelling in his early period, as the editor of Schelling's works places it expressly in the year 1827, in the München period (Schelling's *Works* I, 10, p. vi); whereas Schelling himself, in the essay from which this polemic is taken, already calls Hegel's Philosophy an episode, and even the difference between positive and negative philosophy is mentioned (p. 126). Nevertheless it is highly characteristic that Mr Hartmann will read from even the very latest words of Schelling that the latter was ashamed of having become unfaithful to the old prejudice of absolute science, and of having arrived at the better knowledge that it was possible only by following an inductive procedure to learn anything to which there is a content. Thus was still clinging to Hegel this 'only contemporary who was Hegel's peer', whom Mr Hartmann is bent so eagerly on separating from him.

## II

The second and greater part of the treatise is devoted almost exclusively to the 'critique of the dialectic method'.

To define his 'position to the dialectic method' Mr Hartmann begins his critique by a critique of my critique on Trendelenburg in the *Gedanke*. Mr Trendelenburg had said that Hegel infers, according to the second Aristotelian figure, 'Being is the Indeterminate, Nought is the Indeterminate; therefore Being is Nought': as if a man and a goose were the same because both have two legs. I had replied to this that both conceptions

have other predicates in common besides, such as simplicity, immediateness, pure abstraction. In the same respect, therefore, in which Being is, for instance, the purest abstraction, it is also nought – that is on account of its want of content. But as, according to the principle of contradiction, Being is simply opposite to Nought, this Identity is to be conceived as transition in the Becoming. Such a changing of opposites into each other even Mr Hartmann finds unobjectionable (p. 7). Why, then, does he blame the Hegelian dialectic for the same thing? When he puts to the latter the alternative that the Identity of Being and Nought must be either a partial or a total one (pp. 39–40), I answer: then it is partial when these categories rest outside of each other, because they then fall, as opposites, outside of each other.

In the Becoming, however, the Identity of the opposite has become a total one, because they form there the inseparable Moments of a new idea. These are facts of our thinking, and I do not know how Mr Hartmann will manage to get round them.

The monstrous delusion and error of the author consists in thinking that Hegel, in maintaining the existence of contradiction – may, in declaring all things contradictory for themselves – has negated the principle of contradiction, while by this very doctrine he acknowledged it. It is not he who admits the existence of contradictions who contradicts himself, but he who asserts what is contradictory. We shall see presently, however, that Mr Hartmann's book everywhere swarms with contradictions. Though this circumstance would make it impossible according to Mr Hartmann's opinion (p. 31), our judgment nevertheless shall not preclude the book from existence. Just in the same way history abounds with contradictions; still it exists – nay, for this reason it progresses. For contradiction is not Nought, an impossibility, but rather the source of motion, by which the former negates itself, even if by this a new difficulty is created. So it is indeed a misunderstanding when Mr Hartmann charges that 'the negation of the principle of contradiction is the *conditio sine qua non* for the existence of the dialectic' (p. 41). To identify contradictories (horse and non-horse) is to negate the principle of contradiction: this Hegel never does; he only identifies contraries, as in Grey, Black and White, or Light and Darkness in Colour. An atom of salt is to us base and acid in inseparable union, against which the Understanding sure enough says that atoms of base and of acid are only side by side in the salt. But as we see the opposites in One and still do not at all call it a contradiction, this Mr Hartmann terms 'the dialectic [being] caught in its own net' (p. 43); and yet he knows the difference between contrary and contradictory very well, and knows also that we make the distinction too. Such contradiction lives in himself.

Since from this one misunderstanding, as from an arsenal, Mr Hartmann's whole apparatus of arms of attack is taken, I might be content

with this and save myself reiteration. In this Mr Hartmann confirms me himself when he is naive enough to admit that one can never detect the genuine dialectician in an *absurdity*; but that with the non-dialectic critic it will be as with one hunting spectres (pp. 43–4). Therefore I shall have to mention of such a critique only what besides this will perhaps be found prominent in the way of unusual solecisms. For it is, properly speaking, 'to be considered inconsequent in a dialectician if he engages in the refutation of such attacks from his opponent' (p. 44). Yes, indeed! Besides, I have already communicated to the author, in writing, all my objections against his whole manuscript *ad marginem*. All warnings, however, remained without the slightest effect; he prints the entire trash, even that the dialectic must necessarily, by negating the principle of contradiction, become dangerous to mathematics and to – criminal law (p. 92), and the other absurdities of this and the following page, which I skip in order to make the reader curious to read them. Even Kuno Fischer's quite correct explanation, that 'the question was not about the identity of contradictories, but about the Oneness of the opposites in the dialectic development' (p. 109), could not bring Mr Hartmann to the right track. It applies, therefore, to other people than those at whom Mr Hartmann has aimed it, 'that contradiction can only be found where one has fallen into it before' (pp. 94–5). Now he has, before the eyes of the public at large, to stand the reproof which I first sent him in a confidential letter.

The next point to which I wish to call special attention is that Mr Hartmann says: 'the essential task of the critic of the dialectic method is to exhibit the consequences of the negation of the principle of contradiction' (p. 45). But as we do not at all negate the principle of contradiction, nothing material remains, but something quite immaterial; hence spectres in very truth, which he is hunting also in the remaining part of his publication, up to the very end, faithfully and indefatigably. Mr Bergmann was at least looking for an intermediate position between common logic and speculative dialectic. Mr Hartmann remains resolutely aground on the secure sands of the former.

Where the author afterwards comes to a refutation of the Hegelian idea of Infinity, we read the following: 'Any idea can receive the predicate infinite only in so far as it has a quantitative side' (p. 49); 'but for Hegel there is no quantitative infinity at all in the true sense of the word' (p. 48). But two pages before, it is: the infinitely great is an impossible idea, because it represents the Infinite as really existing, and therefore has in itself the contradiction of an infinity given as finished. That there is no quantitative infinity, for which Hegel is reproved two pages after, the author here avers to be true; to him, therefore, the False is the True – and this he does not call negation of the principle of contradiction. Hegel, he further thinks, knows only qualitative infinities; and, to refute these



Mr Hartmann adds that it would be all nonsense to say 'infinitely bare-footed' (pp. 48–9). Does, perchance, the expression 'infinitely silly' suit him better? As far as we know, the infinity with Hegel comes in but with the negation of limit, i.e. of the one-sided qualitative, therefore with the totality and ideality of the qualities. While the author attributes 'Indeterminateness' to Hegel's Infinity, this infinity is just the opposite of indeterminateness, as it is the self-determining. One who thus kicks at random at a noble philosophy should first learn the facts before he dares to criticize what he neither understands nor seems able ever to learn to understand. But so much the principle of contradiction with our author commences to totter, that he says in the same breath the opposite from what he has said about the indeterminateness in Hegel: 'that the idea precipitates into another determinateness, NOT INTO THE NEGATIVE INDETERMINATE; that it preserves in each determinateness its indeterminateness, this is even the qualitative infinitude of Hegel' (p. 50).

When Mr Hartmann asserts that nobody before Hegel, except Nicholas Cusanus, has placed in antagonism understanding and reason, I refer to Kant, to Jacobi in his later writings, to Plato's *διάνοια* and *ἐπιστήμη* or *νοῦς*, to Aristotle's *ἐπιστήμη ἀποδεικτική* in opposition to *νοῦς* or *νόησις*. This is the way in which Mr Hartmann knows the history of philosophy! In this way he forgets the lamentations which he has uttered himself that Kant distinguishes between understanding and reason. If Mr Hartmann wonders that 'reason is known to so few' (p. 55), it remained but with him to increase this number instead of siding with the unreasoning multitude.

The few who ever knew, for knowledge's sake  
Have ended on the cross and on the stake.

If he furthermore wonders that the majority of men, though they live, act, and are in it, and should necessarily be wholly pervaded by it, still deny its existence, he ought to have remembered the word of the other of these Dioscuri of poetry, that Truth walks ghostlike through the unknowing multitude, which does not even suspect her presence. The very thing which, according to Hegel, as the author mentions, 'constitutes man's nature, REASON, is but scantily represented in the great majority'; and, to use an expression of mine, mentioned by the author, is seized upon only by the 'favourites of the gods', because among mankind, as again Schiller says, the greater part are 'blanks', and only a few 'prizes'.

The Indeterminateness of the Infinite – so often and falsely imputed to Hegel by the author, which he also terms the 'absolute fluidity of the idea' – Mr Hartmann wants to explain on one side in stating that by this Indeterminateness it appears less repulsive to think the unity of contradiction – nay, that in the pure indeterminateness every contradiction had to vanish, so to say; on the other side, he directly denies this

Indeterminateness, as in the absolute, on the contrary, 'contradiction is preserved in its entire antithesis'. Consequently, making the Indeterminateness (in which every contradiction disappears) the principle means rather to make this Indeterminateness not the principle, as the antitheses are to be preserved. We await anxiously from the author a solution of this absolute contradiction. But even now it appears from several examples quoted above, that not Hegel but Mr Hartmann is guilty of negating the principle of contradiction, though in the most innocent way in the world, as he has not the least idea of the reach of his accusations. That Hegel allows the contradiction to exist, and in the absolute Indeterminate posits and engulfs the totality of all things existing (p. 76), is again one of those spectres which Mr Hartmann is hunting. This contradiction, as we have seen above, is solved in the principle of self-determination, inasmuch as all the instances of ideal determinateness (*Bestimmtheiten*) are therein posited as the moments of the absolute.

As to the *legitimation of the method* (p. 66), the author imputes to it that it draws its justification out of itself, being unable to justify itself before the understanding (p. 67). We ask whether it is possible to justify one of the antitheses before the tribunal of the other. The one, of course, rejects the other, and will certainly not yield and be fused into it. That Unity arises from opposites, and the latter from the former, can be justified itself only from a consideration of the case itself. The process of things, like that of thoughts, must be traced and has been traced in experience. This internal rhythmus of the thing itself, which the philosopher is called to witness without influencing it (p. 37), is consummated by itself in the dialectic of the world, as Schelling calls it, as well as in science. And in this very fact lies the confidence of the dialectic method of being this science which is its own proof. Each criterion adduced from outside would make it dependent: the criterion would have to be proven again, and so on *ad infinitum*; the proof would hang in the air unsupported. Yet *veritas est index sui et falsi*.

From the chapter 'The contradiction', which intends to show how Hegel exhibits the contradiction in all and everything, we have stated before the principal among the supposed tricks of dialectic and considered the same. There are only a few 'tricks of the meaner order' left of which Mr Hartmann accuses the dialectic method (p. 79). I will not deny that the dialectic by which Hegel makes Equality and Inequality pass over into each other (*Works*, IV, pp. 42–3) is an impure one like that with which Hegel reproaches Plato in the passage in the *Parmenides* where One changes into Many. But to reproach Hegel with an 'artificial confusion' is as little justified as if Mr Hartmann had reproached Plato with it, if he had known that passage. I, for one, should have given the dialectic of Equality and Inequality in this way: we cannot at all posit two things as equal which are not unequal at the same time, as they would otherwise

not be Two, but only One. And Similarity is just the idea in which Equality and Inequality, while perfect antitheses, yet are simply one. If this assertion negated the principle of contradiction, the fault would lie with the idea of similarity itself; we would wash our hands of it. In mathematics, of course, Equality and Similarity are separate, inasmuch as two equal triangles, as ideal things, are in fact but one; similar ones, however, two.

It is furthermore counted against Hegel as a sophism to assert, 'because A and B are different that A has therefore the difference on itself' (p. 84); the sophism appears to be rather in the assertion that the difference is not an attribute of A itself. For the difference, according to Mr Hartmann, is only 'to express the relation in which both are considered by the thinking process. The relation hovers between the two as a thing added from outside' (pp. 83-4). The amount of it is that ideas do not contain in themselves what the philosopher thinks about them – a monstrous sophism, if the thoughts were correct. So the dialectic method unmercifully has our critic 'on the hip', and pushes him back into the snare which he has laid for others. He accuses Hegel with ascribing difference to Identity because it is different from difference, while this is an expression very common to Plato: which is further testimony against the author's above-mentioned efforts to separate Plato's and Hegel's dialectics.

Opposites which demand each other, as cause and effect, the author further says, presuppose each other as separate, even if they cannot be separated in the thinking process, while the dialectic gives rise to the misrepresenting appearance as if each side contained or possessed its own contrast; which would, of course, be a contradiction (p. 85). But inasmuch as cause is only cause by having an effect, and this effect will not appear if it does not react against the cause – (Boreas may well break an oak but not a reed, because only the one and not the other offers resistance) the effect is only possible by the reaction, i.e. the cause is the effect of its own effect, the effect the cause of its own cause. Are here 'the ideas of cause and effect inseparable only in the thinking process', or are they not rather so in reality too? Will not the author reconcile himself, as he styles it, to think the contradiction? Or does he rather choose not to think the causality? The same quantity of motion is in the impelling hand-cause, in the impelled object-effect. Is quantity for this reason a contradiction? Here, too, the author opines (p. 86) that the contents of cause and effect are not identical. Yet the quantity of motion is identical in both, and solely in reference to this they are cause and effect. They are not at all cause and effect in what they are besides, flesh, wood etc. In reciprocal action, where the identity of cause and effect exhibits itself still more plainly and lies in the very words, and therefore cannot be ignored, Mr Hartmann finds consolation in the statement that Schopen-

hauer 'has done away with this monstrous category for ever' (!?). But what is the use of this doing away, if the Reaction to which the author gives an undeserved preference is not also thrown overboard?

Finally, it is stated that Hegel, in his view of the logical judgment, has committed the terrible offence, made the dreadful 'confusion' (p. 88), of mistaking Unity and Identity (p. 86), for the purpose of being able to discover in each judgment a contradiction between its general form and its content (p. 89). Into the idea of Unity the idea of Identity is introduced, and from this point of view the copula is construed into a sign of identity between the several parts of the sentence (p. 90). Here we find again a whole nest of contradictions in the author's attacks, while he believes that he perceives them on the other side. The 'is' of the copula is no doubt the sign of mathematical equality, as in every logic the form of judgment is  $E = A$  or  $S = P$ . Now Hegel says nothing else but this: 'That the form of the judgment expresses what the content does not mean at all.' Hegel does not at all assert that subject and predicate are the same, or, as the author says, that 'they become united to unity without contradiction' (p. 88). Then only, if Hegel had really made this assertion, he would have committed the contradiction which Mr Hartmann wishes to see avoided. For what is One, is not Two; therefore quite coinciding. It is therefore again Mr Hartmann who mistakes Unity and Identity. For Identity means exactly the combination of two which are different at the same time. Hegel only knows of the Identity of different ones and of the difference of identical ones. What he means to say is therefore this: that even the quite shallow logical form of a judgment cannot kill wholly the speculative thought, the form bearing in itself the identity to which the difference of contents between subject and predicate does not correspond. This non-corresponding is equalized more and more in the higher forms of judgment, the predicate expressing in the categorical judgment the genus of the subject, in the assertorical one its idea, though, for all that, the difference will not wholly disappear.

If Mr Hartmann thinks that Hegel is wronging empiricism by accusing it of denying the supersensuous and freedom (pp. 71, 100), he ought to have consulted history, which would have shown him that these were indeed the consequences of empiricism, as Locke was succeeded by Condillac, the French materialism of the eighteenth, and the German materialism of the nineteenth century. If, nevertheless, empiricism has produced in Mr Trendelenburg, for instance, not materialism but 'happiness in believing', this must be accounted for as inconsequence and not as consequence in this empiric. Otherwise belief would have to be considered as experience; which has been done heretofore by mystics, but never by philosophers. For the attempted proof that Hegel's dialectic and its 'absolute' arose from a sensuous mysticism is such a magnificent piece of Hartmann-like deduction, that I cannot help referring the reader to it for

his amusement (pp. 63–4, 71–2, 77, 120). Mr Hartmann goes a good deal farther than Mr Bergmann: 'Experience is the only possible way to come to a content; for mystic conception is an individual rarity' (p. 111). Mr Bergmann's intellectual intuition, which derives sensuousness from the thought, will probably be pronounced by Mr Hartmann a fantastic conceit. If Mr Hartmann has not yet caught the relation of dialectic and empiricism, even after the rebuke to which I subjected Mr Trendelenburg in the *Gedanke*, if he still sees in their unity nothing but *wind*, to use his own rather easy expression (pp. 113–15), he again stirred this wind himself, forgetful of the principle of contradiction. For, to refute my arguments, he says: 'Michelet forgets that empiricism includes thought.' Consequently, Mr Hartmann admits the very thing about which we care, and which he has imputed to us, and which we consequently cannot have forgotten. For if empiricism includes thinking, it is *one* with it. Thinking, I stated before to Mr Bergmann, is in itself experience: and thoughtless empiricism is not a thing belonging to us, or with which we should like to deal.

Fancying that he has thoroughly and fully refuted in the preceding pages the dialectic method, the author finally proposes the question 'how Hegel happened to strike upon his method' (p. 117). Here the author falls into an entirely unworthy contradiction. After having stated quite correctly the absolute origin of the method from the character of the thing, he undertakes to trace back this necessity to merely contingent circumstances. In the first respect, he says: 'It seems that an *a priori* reproduction of the world's process must be possible before the individual consciousness', yet 'it might bear little resemblance with the temporal genesis of the world'; but which 'can only strengthen the hope for success, as the question is now about an eternal genesis – a process of thought which is the course of the thing itself. Thus on the whole the dialectic method arises from the principle of the Hegelian system, *which is not to be criticised here*. And here the method exhibits itself, mark well, in its pure shape' (p. 118). Very well! To the pure all things are pure. It is a pity that the author falls immediately afterwards into the very impure stupidity of the understanding, of representing the historic genesis of the system, in which indeed the Necessary enters under the appearance of Chance, as a mere disease of fashion: by this it becomes evident that his pretended unwillingness to criticize is mere irony. For if the author, after endeavouring in his historical part to dispute away the genesis of the Hegelian standpoint from the necessary evolution of the history of philosophy in our century, is pricked too deeply by his historical conscience, he has no choice but to transmute historical necessity into historical incident, and to denounce it as mere fashion: 'It was fashion to attribute to Kant's Antinomies an excessive, even a positive, value. It was fashion since Fichte to consider the so-called deduction of categories as the main

subject of the theoretical philosophy. It was fashion to philosophize in the triadic rhythm of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. It was fashion to misunderstand Schelling's transcendental intuition; to pass off philosophy in a pompous manner for the science of the absolute, and so forth. What a straining of history to denounce just the fundamental points of Hegel's three predecessors as "external incidents", merely to saw off from Hegel "the pillars to his method"!' (p. 119).

If the 'jargon and gibberish' of the Hegelian language remained unintelligible to Mr Hartmann, he would have done better to sound more closely this rugged depth instead of complaining about its unintelligibility after some superficial skipping over the pages. This complaint at least has gone out of fashion long ago, after the rich development of the Hegelian school has unlocked those depths without reducing them to shallowness, as the author at some places imputes humanely in parenthesis to the school (p. 95). If, aside from this, 'Hegel's merits in philosophy of rights, aesthetics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of history and history of philosophy', the whole philosophy indeed, are not to be estimated lightly, I should like very much to know how Hegel managed to accomplish this in spite of his method, which 'brought in everywhere obscurity and confusion, made the plain difficult, and removed the dark and problematic farther from its solution' (pp. 119–20). How can merit be possible, as Hegel never made a single step without his method? Or this merit must of necessity be quite exorbitant, superhuman, as he had to overcome the difficulties which his method had prepared for him.

The resumé and the end of my critique is therefore not 'the Hegelian dialectic embraces merely the spectres of its own imagination'; it is not 'the dialectic that suffers of morbid excess of irritation' (p. 120). Mr Hartmann, on the contrary, describes this with his own state of mind, 'which can only show a contradiction in those places where it has carried it in' (p. 123). These contradictions have lodged and crammed themselves into such a 'head' (p. 121) perhaps for the reason that Mr Hartmann 'has never come into personal contact with a teacher of philosophy', and even a teacher's letters have remained without any influence on him.

## Note

1 A critique on the publication *On the Dialectic Method. Historical-Critical Inquiries*, by E. v. Hartmann (Berlin: Carl Duncker, 1868).

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## Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* (1870)

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Karl Rosenkranz

It was natural that during Hegel's intimate association with Schelling, his expression should become somewhat coloured by the latter, in whom we may observe the converse of this influence. When Schelling left Jena in the spring of 1803, Hegel returned more to his own individuality. He resumed also the collegia which he had somewhat neglected during his activity as an author. He lectured especially upon logic and metaphysics, and also upon a philosophical encyclopaedia, *totam philosophiae scientiam, philosophiam logices, naturae et mentis*. This distinguished him from Schelling, who did not lecture at all upon logic or metaphysics, and had critically treated the various philosophical sciences, only once, in the lectures on the methods of academic study. A systematic totality was what lay at Hegel's heart. He collected himself gradually for its production, and intended to bring it out in two parts, of which the first was to contain a critical justification of his standpoint, and the second the system itself. The first only, at the close of his abode in Jena, was brought to press, and appeared in Bamberg in 1807: *The Phenomenology of Mind, or the Science of the Experience of Consciousness*.

This work included, first, the theory of consciousness; second, a critical review of history, to see at what result the history of mankind has arrived in respect to science. It united psychology with the philosophy of history. Hence it has been called a psychology confused by history, or a history distracted by psychology. It is easy to represent it as a monstrosity if narrow criteria are applied, but the inner unity of Hegel's thought was to have consciousness criticize itself by its development, not only in respect to form, but in respect to contents. The title *Science of Consciousness* indicates the content. The mind of mankind itself is summoned to state what form of consciousness it assumes as present, as now final. The chief title *Phenomenology of Mind* recalls the phenomenology of Lambert's *Organon*. Mind advances in its consciousness from step to step.

Each lower stage is shown upon the next higher to have been a relative error, but it is not therefore nothing, but a necessary condition of the higher. This, when it is entered upon, seems to be the highest, but progress reduces this to a mere seeming. It is therefore not entirely false, but only relatively so, in that it was taken as ultimate. In designating the phenomenology as that of *mind*, Hegel indicates the difference which existed between himself and Fichte, Schelling, and previous philosophers in general. In a former treatise upon natural right Hegel had brought the conception of mind into prominence, and had said that it stood higher than nature, while Schelling made nature and mind parallel as co-ordinate factors of the absolute indifference. The conception of mind had hitherto been treated under the conception of reason, consciousness, thinking and willing, but not in and for itself, not as an adequate conception of the absolute. Reason and nature are presuppositions which mind makes for itself, but which, as Hegel says, it overreaches. Reason, nature and mind are mutually co-ordinated in their independence as *idea* in general. In respect to compass, reason is ranked above nature and mind; but in respect to content, reason is put with and in nature, and nature with and in mind. Nature is rational, but it is something other than mere reason, for it becomes specific in gases, metals, earths, plants, animals and constellations. Mind is also in itself rational, but through consciousness it is free from the power of nature, and uses the latter as the organ for realizing its purposes, and thereby spiritualizes it. In its history it annuls nature. It is higher than nature because it is the highest, the absolute in aggregate, which knows itself as truth. Hegel's *Phenomenology* is the preliminary conclusion of the transformations which had begun with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. This critique was no psychology or logic or metaphysics in the sense of school-wisdom; it was all these, yet was nothing of them all; it was one of those anomalous products which appear at epochal points in the development of mind, and in which the past is concluded and a new future is ushered in. Kant's *Critique*, although no definite science, was the foundation of the great modern revolution of philosophy; Fichte's doctrine of knowledge and Schelling's system of transcendental idealism were its consequences. Hegel's *Phenomenology*, after many intermediate formations, is also a result of the same, an analogue of Kant's *Critique*, and, like it, the source of a new movement.

The *Phenomenology* may be and has been called the propaedeutics of Hegel's system; but the name is appropriate only so far as he sought therein to lay the foundations of his standpoint: it must not indicate, as it usually does, a philosophizing outside of philosophy, which is to make the latter easier, to introduce it by gentle gradations, or as far as possible to economize individual thought. On the contrary, the *Phenomenology* is very difficult, for it is still more profound than Kant's *Critique*, than Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*, or than Schelling's *Transcendental Ideal-*



*ism*. The two latter were the immediate and extended consequents of Kant's *Critique*, and are in so far transition stadia from Kant to Hegel. At the same time the relation of the *Phenomenology* to the *Critique of Pure Reason* is most intimate, as is manifest in the first words of the Introduction, which commences thus:

It is a natural notion that in philosophy, before the subject matter itself – namely, the real knowledge of that which in truth is – be entered upon, it is previously necessary to arrive at an understanding concerning the faculty of knowing, which is regarded as the tool by which man possesses himself of the absolute, or as the medium through which he descries it. This solicitude seems to be justified partly by the fact that there are different kinds of knowledge, and among them one may be better adapted than another to the attainment of this ultimate end, so that a false choice may be made among them; moreover, partly by the fact that, since knowledge is a faculty of a definite kind and compass, clouds of error instead of the heaven of truth will result unless a more accurate determination of its nature and boundary is accomplished.

It is impossible in these words, and in the entire subsequent exposition, not to detect constantly implied allusions to Kant's standpoint in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, although Kant is not named. Hegel decidedly dissents, towards the end of the Introduction, from the view that phenomenology is a mere preface, outside philosophy. For consciousness which is established in its phenomenal form, that which arises through its own mutations is ever another object. But for our consciousness which detects the becoming of phenomenal consciousness from stage to stage, this movement itself becomes an object of our knowledge. Hence Hegel says: 'Through this necessity this way to science is itself already science, and, on account of its content, science of the experience of consciousness.'

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* began with transcendental aesthetics, with the receptivity of intuitions of space and time, and ascended through understanding of the analytic logic to the dialectic of reason, to the ideal finality of speculative theology. It ended with the result that the absolute object is incomprehensible to us, since the intelligence of the understanding cannot be adequately applied to the conceptions of reason, but can be brought into relation only to phenomena. Hegel began in the same way with sensuous certainty, which comes to intuition here in space and time. From this, like Kant, he ascended to the absolute, but differed from him in affirming the possibility of absolute knowledge. The final result of the *Phenomenology* is exactly opposite to that of the *Critique*. The interval between sensuous certainty as the beginning, and absolute knowledge as the end, has of course an entirely different content from the interval between Kant's transcendental aesthetics and the ideal finality

of theology. It should be well observed that Hegel regarded absolute knowledge as the limit of the development of consciousness. Not a negative limit, such as, according to Kant, the understanding opposes from fear of the truth of reason, but the positive limit of the highest satisfaction of consciousness, beyond which a higher is impossible; for only the absolute is true, but only the true is absolute. Hegel makes consciousness advance by its own dialectic from one standpoint to another; sensuous certainty makes it have to do, not only with this single object, here and now, but, as soon as it attempts to say what it feels, tastes, hears etc., this must resolve itself into generality. The predicate which it utters of the object as its essence, is a generality which, as such, is not sensuous. The sensuousness of the certainty thereby sublates (annuls) itself; while consciousness is driven onward from the unit (as this being) to generality, another and new standpoint arises. And thus it proceeds from standpoint to standpoint. Formally, the same process is ever repeated for us, but not to the infinite, not progressively to the endless, but with a distinct conclusion in absolute knowledge, in which being and intelligence mutually cover each other. In knowledge of the truth, mind first finds, not the rest of the church-yard, but a rest which is vital and full of content. Science is therefore the absolute power in human life, against which all opposition is vain. What sense has once demonstrated gradually makes its way as law into the knowledge, and finally into the action, of the people. No polity, no religion avails against it. Copernicus overthrew the medieval heaven with his solar system. The Pope contradicted him for centuries, until in 1821 he was obliged expressly to recognize the Copernican system. Buckle, in his history of civilization in England, made the assertion that mankind advance in knowledge, but not in morals. This I regard as an error, for it is impossible that the knowledge of truth should not tend to make men both freer and better. 'Know the truth, and it shall make you free', said Christ.

Since, then, the phenomenology is the science of the experience of consciousness, it nevertheless stands at variance with the conception of science, in that it transposes and adulterates it with historical elements.

Attention must now be drawn to the reproach always urged with so much emphasis, that in the *Phenomenology* Hegel nowhere mentions the name of a philosopher, a people or an event. He allows each standpoint to characterize itself with relative absoluteness. Nevertheless it is unmistakable that he has in mind distinct historical phenomena. Does he employ them, as it were, by chance, as we select any example to illustrate an abstract proposition by a concrete notion? By no means; but we observe that he fixes upon such a phenomenon as can validate itself in universal history as the classic type of the standpoint which is to be elucidated. He borrows his colours from it because they are the most striking and expressive. From the peculiar collusion of this view in the

background, with the conception of the particular stages of consciousness in the foreground, springs that charm of exposition which the *Phenomenology* has ever exerted upon the temper of those who were cultured enough to enjoy it. Hegel gives no illustrations in a dry, scholastic manner, yet we do not miss that insight which we seek in illustration. Hegel must not be understood as though he would say that the general standpoint which he describes is present only among this people, in this condition, at this epoch of history; his meaning is that that which occurs in and for itself in the development of consciousness, as a necessary moment of its becoming, has attained in this form of historical phenomenon its purest objectivity. When, for example, in the conception of the ethical mind, the Hellenic world seems to glimmer through, it should not be understood that he abstracted the conception of ethics from the history of the Greeks, and therefore adduces it here; but this conception is in and for itself universal, and is therefore found, as an essential element, among other people, although among the Greeks in its most pregnant beauty and truth. This procedure is therefore by no means wrong, but is in most exquisite taste.

One should first attempt to understand the *Phenomenology* from itself, rather than apply to it the criterion which Hegel has given in the Preface, which is swollen to the length of a formal treatise. Prefaces are ordinarily printed before the work itself, but are written only after it is completed. It is quite right that the Preface to Hegel's *Phenomenology* should have been regarded as his manifesto against the excesses of Romanticism, and the degeneracies of Schelling's natural philosophy; but the consciousness to which Hegel has given utterance could arise only after the completion of the *Phenomenology*. We shall, therefore, speak of it later.

The more obscure and confused the conceptions which are wont to be made of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the more necessary it becomes briefly to review its outlines, though it is a work so peculiar that, before conclusions are reached, it must be made familiar in the originality of its earliest form. Hegel distinguished as the most general determinations (1) consciousness; (2) self-consciousness; (3) reason. Consciousness is knowledge which has for its object that existence which is given it through mediation of the senses: (a) as sensuous certainty; (b) as perception; (c) as understanding. Sensuous certainty takes the individual thing as truth; but as soon as it undertakes to say what the thing *in se* is, it finds itself compelled to utter a generality concerning it. It supposed itself concerned now and here, and with this which presents itself immediately as an exclusive unit, but in this unit the universal is at the same time contained. To this, consciousness must accordingly direct itself as the truth. It becomes perceptive to discern the properties of the thing in which their generality inheres. Things are what they are through their properties, but at the same time they dissolve themselves through these, for through

these they cohere with other things, and in this coherence they undergo change. The force which determines things is, therefore, a new object for consciousness; the latter becomes understanding in that it searches out the laws which preside over the play of forces. These laws, in their immutability as contrasted with things, constitute a supersensuous world.

Consciousness has thus advanced from sensuous certainty to the certainty of the understanding, that within the sensuous the supersensuous, viz. law, is truth proper. Rather, it is itself the supersensuous; for that which knows laws is not an object of sense, has no properties which can dissolve themselves, but makes itself its own object. It is thus self-consciousness in which are distinguished (a) its independence; (b) its freedom. It is independent in so far as it subjects life, with its passions and lusts, to itself; dependent, in so far as, conversely, it subjects its own self to life and its passions and lusts. But how does it learn this distinction? Not by distinguishing itself, within itself, from itself, as ego; nor by distinguishing the likeness of the ego from life and its manifold passions and lusts; but by coming to itself in another ego, and entering upon a life-and-death conflict with it: for thus alone can it become truly self-certain, both whether it has exalted itself above the attachment to life and whether the opposing consciousness has done so. Should self-consciousness either renounce the conflict, or fear death, or cherish life more than self, in so doing it unselfs itself, becomes dependent, subject to another self, and degrades itself to the service of a lord. This conflict for recognition, to find self for others its like, is the origin of the relation of servitude and dominion. This position of Hegel has often been invidiously perverted into the doctrine that slavery is a righteous necessity, which he never intended. It is generally said that slavery originated in the captures of warfare. Hegel goes deeper, and inquires how there arose the subjection of one man to another. He answers, 'From the want of self-subsistence in self-consciousness'. And 'Whence arises this?' he inquires. 'From fear of death, from the subjection of self to life.' Hegel develops the mysterious ethico-psychological process from which the fact of slavery arises. By culture, the slave can gradually make himself worthy to be recognized by his master as independent; he gives him freedom because it is already present in him. The freedom of self-consciousness lies in its self-determination as a thinking will. It appears, according to Hegel, in the forms (a) of Stoicism; (b) of scepticism; (c) of unhappy consciousness.

Stoicism retires from all reality into the purity of thinking, into the thought of freedom, to which no access from without can be obtained, and in which it is indifferent whether the subject exists as servant or sovereign; for, though in chains, it can still think. Scepticism, conversely, frees itself from the pressure of reality by construing it as mere appearance, as a turmoil of contradictions. Nevertheless it adapts itself to the dominant order of things, which for it is a falsehood. It subjects itself to

a reality which is naught to it, since of every distinction which empiricism can find, its opposite exists. The repose of the Stoic, and the unrest of the sceptic, absorbed in the detection of contradictions, coalesce in the unhappy consciousness, which, from the unrest of the phenomenal world as the Present, rises to the rest of the Beyond as its true essence, but from this exaltation sinks back again into itself. The Essence which is in the Beyond is universal, immutable; that which is here, on the other hand, as an individual is exposed to mutation. It attempts by labour to escape the sundering of the Present and the Beyond; but labour augments its independence, its property, its enjoyment. Hence it thanks the Eternal for what is mutable; it renounces the attempt to bring itself into harmony with its activity; but, while it thanks, it acquits itself of its obligation to the Immutable, for thereby it recognizes the latter, and returns to its individuality. To express the same still more earnestly, it makes sacrifice of its possession through the priests of the Immutable, who, in place of the latter, receive his gift. But the priest, who renders thanks in its name, is no more the Immutable than the sacrifice is the individual who offers it through the priest. Hence self-consciousness denies itself the enjoyment of the gifts which the Immutable presents it; it fasts, chastises itself, and finally, in order spiritually to annihilate itself, allows itself to be determined by priests as the council of its conscience. In order to be free from itself, it has renounced its freedom of self-determination, and acts as the slave of priests. It is unhappy, for it is broken down; and does not escape from itself even when it surrenders itself to authority, for it must resolve to do even this. It must will to be unselfed.

But since the Beyond is pure thought, no less so than self-consciousness, it experiences that, at bottom, the Immutable is united in itself with the Mutable; and that the Eternal, which seemed to be a Beyond, is really present in the Here. This consciousness of the unity of the idea and its reality is reason. Rational self-consciousness is, according to Hegel, (1) certainty of the truth of reason; (2) mind; (3) religion; (4) absolute knowledge. The certainty of the truth of reason proceeds directly and instinctively to discover itself. It becomes (a) observing reason; (b) realization of rational self-consciousness through itself; (c) individuality, which is real in and for itself. Observing reason applies itself (a) to nature; (b) to purity of self-consciousness and its relation to external reality; (c) to the immediate reality of self-consciousness. Objects of nature are described, arranged and investigated according to their laws. Inorganic as well as organic nature is appropriated by observation as rational. Reason observes – and so does self-consciousness in its purity – how it follows logical laws in thinking, and how it is subject to psychological laws in its development; for individuality, in its reciprocity with the circumstances which casually surround it, evolves nothing which was not involved in its instincts, propensities and faculties. The great influence which is wont to

be ascribed to circumstances is valid only in so far as the individual admits and incorporates them into his activity. Hence in immediate reality as it appears in physiognomy and in the brain (or, since this cannot be directly perceived, in the skull), observation recognizes the existence of self-consciousness. The mental is one with the material, as brain and spinal marrow. Without brain, observing reason can find no self-consciousness, no thinking, no mind.

The antithesis of observation is the attempt of self-consciousness to realize the conception of reason through itself – not to find, but to produce, the reality of the conception. Hegel distinguishes here (a) pleasure and necessity; (b) the law of the heart, and the frenzy of self-conceit; (c) virtue, and the way of the world. Under the standpoint of pleasure and necessity, he included that form of self-consciousness which reason seeks in the satisfaction of the appetites and passions in pleasure; but experiences that enjoyment has a limit, and that pleasure is contravened by necessity arising out of itself. Pleasure would make all a means of enjoyment; but the world, the Universal, is not to be consumed. The consciousness for which pleasure has decayed seeks happiness in the heart; to make itself and all being happy becomes its law. But the world, by its nature and its institutions, renders this high undertaking difficult; so that, as soon as it experiences this contradiction, the good heart in its self-conceit revolts to frenzy. Self-consciousness, therefore, concludes to renounce happiness, and to follow the law of the heart. In duty it recognizes law as general necessity, and is ready to sacrifice its individuality to it. Virtue must perform duty for its own sake. All inclination must be excluded. The Good exists only through virtue; if it be not realized, it is a mere thought. Virtue is thus brought into conflict with the way of the world, for the world, as such, is not virtuous. It guards individuality, and contends against vice only so far as it violates public law or becomes crime. Up to this limit individuality, even in its infirmities and vices, is allowed wide scope. Virtue revolts at the wickedness of the world, and spends itself in pompous delineations of its conflicts, its purity, its nobility, its incomparableness, its sacrifices. It thinks it very sad that virtue must so often succumb. The vicious world, strange to relate, does not collapse, but preserves itself in tolerable order.

Individuality, by its varieties, produces manifoldness and interest. The world cannot dispense with it, nor indeed can virtue; for without it there can be nothing to contend against, nothing to be resigned to. Without the existence of temptation, of vice, the hero of virtue would have no cause for pride. Thus it is individuality which, by the resignation of virtue to it, has shown it itself pre-eminent. It is in and for itself real, i.e. it no longer seeks out of itself what it possesses within. In its immediacy it is indeed only natural individuality, but as the certainty of reason it appears (a) as animal kingdom of mind; (b) as law-giving; (c) as law-proving

reason. As animal kingdom of mind, it produces itself in works in which it gives its peculiarity an objective expression. Such a work is not absolutely universal, for this it can represent only according to what individuality in its particularity is able to do; and therefore the latter modestly asserts that it intended merely a contribution to the Universal, and that it designed what was done to be referred not to itself, but to the subject. But the work also stands in relation to others who apprehend and judge of it. Since these are also individual ties, their judgment is also coloured by this peculiarity, although they likewise modestly insist that not they themselves, but the subject alone is concerned. Thus deception arises from both sides. The producer makes the subject his own, wishes to display himself in it – to put his own talent, culture, skill, mind to account. Thus not only the subject, but essentially he himself, is concerned in the work. The critic, on the other hand, rightly says that he must judge of the work as good, bad or indifferent only because the subject demands it; but, at the same time, the judgment is his, and expresses his penetration, erudition, taste and mind. It is, therefore, his own individuality which comes into account in his judgment, and he deceives himself and others if he asserts that it remains neutral. When this deceit is recognized on both sides, consciousness ascends to that instance in which both producer and critic have to subject themselves to the conception of reason as law. Reason is the criterion which must be applied both to production and judgment. Reason gives laws, practical, aesthetic etc. But these numerous laws, which exist with and through each other, require in turn a demonstration of how far they are rational and at one with each other.

Law-proving reason seeks not, as it were, to annul laws, but to refine them by its critique, to liberate them from their isolation and one-sidedness and imperfect construction, in order, in them, to become absolutely certain of the truth of reason. This is the result of the development of reason, i.e. of the standpoint of mind. Mind is self-certain of reason as its truth. It is (a) immediately the *true mind*, or the *morale*; (b) self-estranged mind, or culture; (c) mind certain of itself, or morality. To these conceptions Hegel limits the conception of mind, which he distinguishes from that of religion. True mind, as moral, appears, according to Hegel, (a) in the ethical world; (b) in ethical action; (c) in the condition of rights.

The moral world is immediately included in the family and the nation, for here freedom and necessity are indistinguishably one. Natural individuality, its external reality, pleasure and its limits, necessity, the good heart and its vanity, creative activity and criticism, law-giving and law-proving reason, are annulled in ethics. Man and woman as husband and wife, the latter as parents, parents as trainers of children, children as brother and sister, stand in spiritual relationship by virtue of their natural connection. Brother and sister sustain the purest relationship, because

here the sexual passion is not concerned as it is between parents, after whose death the brother is the natural supporter and protector of the sister. All families are individual in one people. Only the princely family in its individuality is at the same time the collectivity of the state. The ethical act springs from the ethics of the people, in which the reason of mind is present. The law which animates the ethical appears partly as divine, partly as human; as divine in piety, which is especially cherished by woman, who is ordained by nature as guardian of the hearth; as human in the law of the state, whose prime guardian is the prince. Divine and human law may collide, which for the individual is his fate. He bears the guilt of his fate, but in it becomes conscious of the right which summoned him to the doing of his deed. He acted because, as a member of the family or state, he could act only so, and not otherwise. Right itself, in turn, acquits him of his guilt and his wrong – as Orestes, Creon, Antigone, rightly did wrong, wrongly did right. The consciousness of right makes man a person, and in the atomic individualization of personality, ethical unity resolves itself into the multiplicity of the indifferent masses, which again can be held together only by a single person as a despotic power. Right is cold and egotistic as long as it seeks only to accomplish itself. When husband goes to law with wife, parents with children, brothers and sisters with each other, the spirit of the ethical has vanished. The individual insists on his right whatever consequences may follow, but just for this reason right is cold and regardless. Mind which is estranged from itself (a) presents itself in the world of its estrangement, partly as culture, partly as belief; (b) becomes *éclaircissement* in that it opposes and makes an end of superstition; (c) in absolute freedom estrangement has the sense of self-renunciation for something other than we ourselves really are. The right of person inheres therein as far as in this act the entire will is expressed. The importance which the individual attains outside himself in society depends upon whether he possess power or riches. Power is attained by state service; riches, by augmenting possessions. In the former, he acts nobly when he devotes his efforts and his activity, even to the sacrifice of his own life, to the state; in the latter, when his possessions, even to self-retrenchment, are given up to benefit the poor. Still the state is not without distrust of those in power, who serve it, lest they misuse their power against it. The client, the pauper, is not without inner indignation that benefits must be presented to him. It seems to be chance that a person can elevate himself by means of power, riches, or indeed both – for power may lead to riches and riches to power – since individuality, as such, is originally a stranger no less to power and honour than to riches. It can lose as well as possess both.

Mind, therefore, seeks a possession which is inalienable from its individuality, and which can be affected by no mutations of power or riches.



This possession is culture, which the individual gives himself. But culture is estrangement from his immediate naturalness, for it makes of man something other than he is by race, sex etc. It raises him above the hazard of power or riches, for it is the self-consciousness of mind in its universality which can be snatched away by no fate. In cultured society the individual is significant, not because he is powerful or rich, but because he is cultured. Each signifies only what he has made of himself by culture. But there are of necessity different departments, grades, peculiarities, in culture; therefore it becomes its essential interest to set up a standard of culture for individuals, for just here is shown *how* one is cultured; for the criteria which one applies characterize the standpoint of one's own culture. Judgments also become involved in contradiction; nay, one comes to appear talented by so much the less as one agrees with the judgment of others, or indeed with the judgment of the multitude. Thus arises a universal disintegration of mind, in which the chaos of various cultures and naturally contradictory judgments begets finally a chaotic confusion, above which only faith emerges, which subordinates culture as a vanity of the present. Before God is no respect of persons. Neither might nor riches nor culture entitle one to blessedness; heaven does not demand from its own the evidence that they are talented, but the poor in spirit are blessed if they are pure in heart. But faith, which is indifferent to it, agrees with culture in that it estranges the mind from immediate reality, for it transports it to the representation of a Beyond, of which, here, we can have no experience. In this fantastic world it is quite at home with its representations, and discerns that all must be just as it is.

The *éclaircissement* overtakes it nevertheless, because on the one side it clings to the supersensuous, yet on the other cannot deny that it wishes to find the supersensuous in the sensuous. *Eclaircissement* is the unavoidable product of culture which seeks satisfaction only in thought, and pushes forward faith with its double housekeeping in the present and in the Beyond. Faith, as genuine, does not think of making the sensuous the ground of blessedness, but it always contradicts itself by the weight which it lays upon the sensuous; for, in spite of its insight into the transitoriness of what is earthly, and the nothingness of what is external, it believes in sacred places, times and pictures; it believes in sanctification by washing, and by partaking of consecrated food and drink; by acts of sense, pilgrimages, fasts, scourgings etc. It believes that eternal truth is contained in writings which have been preserved by chance etc. Especially it represents the Beyond again in a form which is really only a copy of the human, of the Present. Its gods, angels, devils have human shape. Angels play on harps, sing etc. Faith revolts against this critique, which lacerates its very heart, just as the talented consciousness of culture

revolts against its own distraction because the latter derisively expresses it.

*Eclaircissement* has its truth in the thought of the usefulness of things, for therein it attains the unity of being and of thought. Prosaic as the category of use may be, it still contains the thought of the end and aim for which things are present as means. It twines itself through all things as the bond which unites them to each other. All is useful. In nature, earth is useful to plants, plants to animals, animals to animals. All nature is useful to man, man to man; and even religion is useful, for it constrains man patiently to endure the pains of the Present in view of the future To Be.

The category of usefulness also contains the unity of thought and being of the idea and its reality, which, as deism and materialism, are widely separate; on the one hand, into the abstraction of a supreme essence, and into matter on the other. Its metaphysics knows only things and their properties; and among things, useful or natural, full as many have hurtful relations, for what is useful in one respect harms in the opposite; yet through this twofoldness of all things *éclaircissement* affirms the ever uniform stability of the world.

As the true, the moral mind is merged in the condition of right; so likewise the culture of the self-estranged mind is merged in absolute freedom and terror. The thinking of the *éclaircissement* has disposed of all, and has left to consciousness, at last, only the thinking of thinking, for *éclaircissement* supremely respects the logic of the understanding that twice two is four. If pure thinking would give itself a content, it must determine itself as will; but the will, conformably to the standpoint of thinking, will have to be a pure will, which wills itself in its universality. Yet since in its reality the will is always individual, universality as such can hold only a negative relation to will when it wills to realize itself. It becomes a fanaticism which would exterminate the existing order of things. In so far as will assumes the form of government, the purpose of which is to care for the general well-being, and to realize the will of all, it becomes an object of suspicion to individuals, because as such they possess the possibility of dissenting from the will of the government, which assumes the standpoint of universality. To meet the danger thus arising, nothing remains but to put such to death. But individuals conversely become objects of suspicion to government, because it is government that, in their determinations, they do not seek the pure will of all, but rather some special end. Government is therefore accused of being partisan, and its members in turn are executed. A new government is instituted, which in short time succeeds no better. The terror of death is the result of absolute freedom, which detects slavery in every ethical relation, in family, rank, office; and fears, persecutes, and slays every

individual who does not seem to come out into the colourless abstraction of freedom as absolute.

In the dissolution of the world of culture, the only stability is the mind's certainty of itself, or morality. The individual who ascends the scaffold, not because he has committed a crime, but because he has expressed an opinion other than absolute freedom has declared valid by the stamp of universality, dies with the certainty of having remained true to himself, of having acted correctly, morally. This certainly exalts him above death, and destroys the terror which it is said to inspire. The moral view of the world looks above the Present far beyond into a relationship in which all the contradictions of history shall be conciliated. In reality, to be sure, the highest good, the harmony of virtue with happiness, is not yet present, but is striven for as that which should be. If it had not to contend with vice, virtue would not be virtue. Without instincts, desires, passions, temptation, it would be without the material of conflict – would be an unemployed, inactive virtue. It should prosper externally, for through its exertions to overcome the allurements of vice it acquires a certain claim upon happiness; but experience shows that the virtuous often find the world very unfriendly, while the vicious find it very comfortable. While, then, virtue postulates happiness, although it confesses that in reality it by no means corresponds with the conception, its claim is no less unfounded than when the envy with which it looks askance at the prosperity of the vicious claims to be called virtuous. The moral order of the universe, according to Hegel, is a dissimulation [*Verstellung*], which its bad conscience, that it is not really virtuous or free from sensuousness, conceals under the complaint of the difficulties which assail the virtuous, and against the course of the world when the bad thrive and the good suffer hardship. And yet conscience can in fact become self-certain, because it is determined not by feeling, but by the conception of duty which is clear and unambiguous. The new difficulty which now arises consists in the fact that duty which would perfect virtue as pure duty for its own sake resolves self into a plurality of duties, so that although each individual is determined for himself, he may fall into doubt which to perform, or at least which to perform first. But in fulfilling one duty the individual may violate other duties, though it be only by omitting their performance. Hence, to act with perfect morality, it seems best not to act at all, for in so doing one stains oneself in some way with finitude. By the determination of an act, no one can avoid exciting contradiction, or reaping blame. The fear of degrading its high ideal by expression in action, of soiling it by contact with vulgarity, drives back the aesthetic soul into itself to refresh itself in the purity of its inactivity, and with other aesthetic and congenial souls to fall into criticism of those who act and therefore err. The erring person, however, who confesses his sin thereby annihilates it. Should the aesthetic soul close itself against him,

it would itself become wicked. It must pardon him who confesses his wickedness; for as he became wicked, so can he become good again. Thus the good must recognize the essence of equal freedom in the wicked, and, if he has confessed, cannot hard-heartedly hold itself aloof in privileged exclusiveness. The forgiveness of the wicked is the breaking through of religion, for it is the mind's act of majesty to make what has been done as though it were not done. In the act mind becomes conscious of its sovereignty over nature and history. The wickedness which I repent of is as though it had not occurred. I break off from my past, estrange myself from it, cast it from me as a nullity.

In religion, mind as human ascends to unity with the divine, to certainty of absolute truth; for this unity is truth. This sphere, in turn, begins as such from the bottom to build itself up, step by step, to perfection, viz. from the natural religion, through art-religion, to revealed religion. In natural religion, mind beholds the absolute still in natural existence, in the heavenly bodies, in plants, animals, until, as Hegel expresses it, like a master-workman, it encloses the hull of mind, its corpse, in the habitation which it has prepared for it out of stone. Building now becomes the *cultus*. With it, mind passes over to art-religion, which venerates the divine in the Beautiful, which it produces in statues of deities humanly beautiful, in the beautifully formed contestants at gymnastic sports, and in epic, lyric and dramatic poetry. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel has treated art only as religion, because it here simply gains the significance of the absolute, and in no sense serves as an ornament for prosaic ends, or as a means of recreation. But this aesthetic religion, after it has passed through the earnestness and pain of tragedy, dissolves into the frivolity and pleasure of comedy, after it has made all, even the gods of the nether world, its wanton sport. Now it becomes evident what mind is. Trust in the gods has vanished – the oracles are dumb – the altars empty – hymns are words without power – priests are needy, weak mortals like others – the statues of the gods are but cold figures to which Faith no more lends a soul – Consciousness shudders back into itself in this mental waste, and can no longer save itself from the despair of its absolute misfortune by the scorn of comic perversion. God can be found as the true God neither in nature nor in art, but reveals himself as such only in the real man who knows that he is one with him in self-consciousness. God has not only human form, is the aesthetic God, but becomes a man who can be felt, seen, heard. The absolute substance appears as an actual subject, which also really dies, i.e. the divine is the essence of the human self-consciousness; all disunion is extinguished in the Atonement.

Religion, therefore, already knows what truth is; but its knowledge is yet imperfect, for it has not yet the form of pure self-consciousness, of the conception, but of intuition and representation. Indeed, revealed religion cannot yet detach itself from the sense-coloured breadth of rep-

resentation. It goes back into the past, or forward to the future. In the course of the year, on its festal days, it lives through the circle of its representatives in which truth presents itself to it in historical forms. It remains, therefore, to give to the absolute content absolute form. This is the final standpoint of phenomenally absolute knowledge, a beyond which has no passage to another, because in it not only truth but also certainty is posited as absolute. To elevate religious representation into the form of thought is to *dissolve* it as representation; to dissolve does not mean to destroy its content, but to free it from its contradiction of representing the eternal in forms of adjacency and succession. That which should be absolutely conformable to self-consciousness must be like itself pure idea, which, as absolute presence, is independent of time and space. Religious consciousness forgets itself momentarily in its representations, but falls back from them into itself again. Absolute knowledge not only conceives its object in and for itself, but conceives itself in its knowledge.

The position which Hegel has given to absolute knowledge, i.e. to speculative philosophy, became later the occasion of much opposition, since priests and theologians very naturally found in it an insufferable presumption which degraded religion to a 'mere representation'. We will here only remark that science cannot dispense with the critique of faith, and faith can assume no privileged immunity from being really thought. The particular science of faith struggles against being dissolved in the general science of nature and of mind; but really it cannot escape this fate, because this is necessarily involved in the relation between representation and thought. The miracles of faith are incomprehensible because they lack a rational nature. They can be represented, but not thought. Thought can find a general content symbolically expressed, an abiding truth; but, with this discovery, thought elevates its truth above its sensuous actuality, and transforms it into allegory. Miracles are to remain for faith an individual fact, which it devoutly gazes upon; for science, they are to become a universality which is absolutely true.

When we glance back upon the *Phenomenology* in its totality, we must admit that it is a work which can be ranked in no traditional department, but at the same time we cannot refrain from the opinion that its greatness lies in its strangeness and uniqueness. An ordinary schoolmaster's understanding, which revolves with economical exactitude within the paragraphs of the textbook, never would have hit upon such a monstrosity. The mastership with which Hegel characterizes each particular standpoint of mind may pardon the occasional artifice of its deductions. His appositeness justifies, upon reflection, the apparent strangeness of his expression. When, for example, Hegel calls culture the self-estranged mind, the word has acquired the partial meaning of confusion of mind, like the French word *aliéner*. All culture sustains a negative relation to our immediateness. We have in schools Greek and Latin, which we do not speak in

life, but in which we estrange ourselves from our every-day reality; our companions travel among 'strangers' in order to exalt themselves above the narrowness of home life etc. Hence the expression 'estrangement' is quite right. Each new standpoint which consciousness enters upon is absolute for it so long as it deals with it; as, conversely, the world – in itself ever the same – is new for every new generation. It was with deep design that Hegel included the practical side of mind in the *Phenomenology*, a deduction of absolute knowledge from dogmatism and scepticism; realism and idealism would not have corresponded to the totality of mind. The forms of consciousness which the *Phenomenology* exhibits in a long series are constant elements of mind which lie between the extremes of sensuous certainty and absolute knowledge, and which hence always and everywhere reproduce themselves; in their individualization they may likewise modify the form of their appearance. Each is relatively the whole, but it is first in the absolutely free self-consciousness of spirit that it comprehends itself as the idea of truth. No one will deny that sensuous certainty and perception, that the conflict of self-consciousness for recognition, that Stoicism and scepticism, that the efforts of the unhappy self-consciousness to solve the contradiction between heaven and earth, are standpoints which ceaselessly renew themselves among men. The case is the same with reason, which can never become weary of observing the nature of natural phenomena, in order therein to find itself. It has been supposed, in considering the laws of physiognomy, that Hegel intended, with Lichtenburg, to deride a presumptive science, and that only a transient mania of his time induced him to incorporate this matter; but the interest of mind to rediscover itself in the eternal reality of its form is constant. Our interest will always be excited in observing the physiognomy and cranial development of a Raphael, Schiller, Napoleon, Talleyrand, Socrates and others, and therein tracing the expression of their minds. The realization of rational self-consciousness in pleasure and necessity, in the good heart and in the frenzy of conceit, or in virtue and the course of the world, astonishes us at first by the originality of its delineation; but it makes, nevertheless, a constant factor in the phenomenal knowledge of mind. Among the Greeks, for example, it was the Cyrenian school which gave utterance to the experience that pleasure has its limits in necessity, and the Hegesians, who proceeded upon the attempt to fulfil pleasure constantly, concluded upon suicide because they found it impossible. The author of the Koheleth, among the Hebrews, expressed the same experience of the vanity of all things. Individuals ever repeatedly attempt to make pleasure their principle, but in the satisfaction of their desires they ever find the experience unavoidable that in enjoyment they have subjected themselves to a necessity inseparable from pleasure. It is the same with the good heart and virtue in their one-sidedness and inexperience. When Hegel shows that virtue may be

overcome by the course of the world, it may seem that he places no high estimate upon virtue, but only that virtue succumbs in the conflict with the course of the world, which wrongly estimates its own principle, the right of individuality, and regards its own sacrifice as the Absolute. Eating and drinking, sleeping and begetting of children, working and recreation from labour in sport and the accumulation of property will ever strike out new courses. The existence of monks and nuns presupposes as its condition the existence of the course of the world, from which they retreat behind high walls. Individuality then makes its appearance as that which is real in and for itself. This standpoint also makes a constant element of the *becoming* mind, which produces itself as its object in what it creates, in which it deposits its entire peculiarity, but thereby calls out the judgment of other individualities. This 'animal kingdom of mind', as Hegel sportively and wittily expresses himself, is likewise a constant element of history; and, to become convinced that this is the case, it is only necessary to read prefaces to books which are published to find the assurance that their authors are concerned only with their respective subject matter, to which they offer their modest contribution, or, on the other hand, to read the critiques of books in which the reviewers assert, with praise or blame, that they are concerned only about the subject matter. Law-giving and law-proving reason are constantly present in the constitutional conflicts of states. It is proposed, for instance, to abolish the death penalty; the law is subjected to criticism, the grounds which sustain the proposition are examined etc., whether they are in accordance with reason.

In the description of mind it has been said that Hegel at first had before his eyes the Hellenic ethics as Aeschylus and Sophocles depicted it, but in the dissolution of the true ethical mind in the legal condition which strengthens the egoism of persons, the Roman Empire. Then he makes the process of the estrangement of mind complete itself in feudalism and Catholicism; but the culture of humanism, on the other hand, reacts in *éclaircissement*, and absolute freedom culminates in the terrorism of the French Revolution. In the standpoint of morality he alludes to the dualism of German philosophy in the Fair Saint, especially to Jacobi's ALL-WILL and Waldemar. It may be unhesitatingly granted that from the phases of history he derived his colours for these standpoints, but it does not follow that these are not constant elements in all history. Hegel depicts – in the act of the ethical mind for example blood revenge, with unmistakable references to Orestes and Oedipus; but blood revenge is a constant element of the ethical in the family, among all peoples who are making the transition from the sphere of their natural condition to that of the state. The Arab who avenges the death of his father is in this respect as ethical as Orestes. That Hegel opposes right, as private right, to the ethical is likewise to be understood generally, although Roman

jurisprudence carried out the conception of personal atomism most perfectly. When children as heirs of their patrimony do not quarrel about their respective shares, but seek to terminate the strife by judicial decision, the very spirit of the ethical has vanished. Even Aristophanes, in his comedies, attacked the bad disposition of the citizens, who became entangled in their private interests and their lawsuits about *meum* and *tuum*, and allowed the ancient virtue of Marathon, which guided itself in view of the whole, to fall into decay. Culture in a distinct sense, where the word denotes primitive civilization, is also a constant element among all people, who, by reverence of the power of the state, or by the splendour of riches, have elevated themselves above the significance of the individual to self-consciousness of mind. When Hegel here, in characterizing the peculiar distraction to which this standpoint leads, borrows a few features from Diderot's dialogue *Rameau's Nephew*, one must not be so narrow as to believe that he thought only of the intellectual French society of the eighteenth century. This language, which levels all difference of station, which expresses with spirit all the phenomena of mind, even the most depraved, which discloses with shameless publicity all the contradictions of mind, attracts interest to itself whenever the individual, by way and manner of speaking, attests that he is a man of culture, and when comparison of tendency of independence and of degree of culture is the chief topic of the general discourse. Lucian among the Greeks, Petronius among the Romans, Heine among the Germans discover a language similar to that of Diderot among Frenchmen. *Eclaircissement* is no less a constant element of history, for it arises from culture. The Sankhya philosophy of the Indians is an *éclaircissement* of their mythology. The doctrine of the sophists was an *éclaircissement* among the Greeks, as in modern times the movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Over against the popular belief of the Greeks, Plato with his critique of their mythology appeared as an apostle of *éclaircissement*, and, like those in England, France and Germany, would substitute morals in its place. The standpoint of absolute freedom, i.e. of that freedom which wills the will only as universal, may seem to be so designated by Hegel as though only the first French revolution hovered before him; but in itself this form of consciousness is a constant element of history, where democratic and communistic tendencies pass over into fanaticism. This element was present in the German peasant war, among the English Puritans, and the social reformers of the Paris revolution of February, as well as among the Jacobins, who overthrew the Girondists. Morality is depicted with extraordinary accuracy by Hegel; no one can doubt that here he detects one of the most general standpoints of mind: but the turn which Hegel gives to it – viz. in making religion, or the certainty of the unity of the human and divine mind, to emerge from the wicked man's confession of guilt and from his pardon – may seem



peculiar. Otherwise, morality appears as that inclination which religion absorbs in itself, as private right absorbs the aesthetic *morale* (ethical condition). But morality has exalted itself above this standpoint; and now Hegel shows how mind, apprehending itself in conscience, passes over from the isolation of its self-certainty, through pardon of the wicked, to the truth of the community. This is one of his most profound and beautiful developments. That religion is construed as a constant element of mind is of course self-evident, and the question can only arise how far the differences between natural religion, art-religion and revealed religion are constant. This question is answered by the fact that every man must in childhood pass through the stages of fetichism and pantheism, which compose the essence of natural religion. Even if people existed no longer in a state of nature, still the contemplation of nature in sun, moon, plants and animals would precede the representation of a creative God, even for children who grew up within the pale of a revealed religion. Children often sustain the same relation to animals which men in a state of nature do in animal worship. Hegel treated art-religion in general as the presentation of art, because only as religion does it make the beautiful a pure Absolute. Art lies without as a moment in the standpoint of production and culture. The beautiful is now, to be sure, the absolute in respect to form, but only the aesthetic standpoint sublimates the truth of the absolute and must subordinate itself to it, as occurs in revealed religion, which makes art a means in its *cultus*. Roman Catholicism, in architecture, sculpture, music and poesy, has produced as excellent works of art as the Greek art-religion, but religion as such has ever distinguished itself from these works even when supersitition has confounded them.

Finally, absolute knowledge exists in all philosophical endeavour as a constant element, for philosophy must strive for such a certainty of truth that even the formal side of knowledge may be complete, that certainty may become true, and truth certain. Philosophy is, therefore, capable of endless development, since neither its breadth nor the depth of knowledge can have a limit. That all moments of the experience of consciousness make up constituent elements of mind Hegel distinctly affirms in saying that phenomenology has the same content as a system of science. The latter is not power, nor is it riches. The difference lies in the fact that that which phenomenology presents as a standpoint of phenomenal knowledge in the relation between consciousness and its object, so that knowledge during its becoming does not conceive itself until by its mutation it has arrived at a result, although we who observe its process can apprehend it before it becomes clear to itself – that this appears in the system as a pure, organic conception, no longer confused with consciousness.

The sequence of the conceptions is in general the same in both spheres, although with the difference which is conditioned by the nature of con-

sciousness. In the history of consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, mind, religion and absolute knowledge follow in order; but in history many modifications occur through freedom, chance, arbitrariness, which are eliminated from the necessity of the system. The standpoint of natural religion, for example, may be interrupted by the violent intrusion of revealed religion; for what wide extremes may be united in consciousness! Take a New Zealander of today, as he may be seen and spoken to in London, who in his youth has participated in cannibal feasts, but is now converted to Methodist Christianity. Thirty or forty years ago he ate human flesh; now at the Lord's table he partakes of the body and blood of Christ. An important point of the succession is that each higher standpoint elevates each lower into itself, and reduces it to a moment which disappears in itself. That which in an earlier stage had absolute significance for consciousness loses it in the higher. The most earnest occupations of earlier ages, as Hegel expresses it, sink in an advanced stage to be childish plays. It might be asked whether many of the elements which Hegel adduces have not now entirely vanished. Under art-religion, for example, he speaks of living art-work, and understands thereby the reverence in which the Greeks held beauty, and the strength and suppleness of the human body. The Greeks, indeed, deified beautiful men because they were beautiful. This element exists among us no longer as a religion. We build temples to no man now because he is beautiful, but in the circus we admire the beauty, strength and gymnastic virtuosoship of the human body, i.e. the living art-work. It is degraded to a mere moment of secularity, but it is not wanting. The successive connection of the forms of consciousness, which advances from sensuous certainty to absolute knowledge, is therefore necessary. If we have attained a certain grade of consciousness, we must advance to philosophy; and hence, not only in Greece but in China and India, not only among Christians but among Mohammedans, not only among Europeans but among Americans, we see philosophers arise; for even the practical, gain-seeking, pure utilitarianism of the Yankees has not prevented the appearance among them of a Parker, an Emerson.

Hegel preceded his *Phenomenology* by an extended Preface, in which he defined his relation to the dominant views respecting the essence and method of philosophy still more distinctly than in the Introduction to his article concerning the difference between the systems of Fichte and Schelling. He strongly contended, moreover, against the degeneracy of Schelling's philosophy, which among many of its adherents had sunk to a mere formalism, and which sought to conceal the want of scientific earnestness partly by fantastic decoration, and partly by the assumption of dictatorial impertinence and prophetic unction. Hegel contended no less against the insipidity of *éclaircissement*, which sought a narrow satisfaction in the temporal, than against the pseudo-geniality of Romanticism,

which was designed to supersede the pains and the thoroughness of learning, by simple inspiration. He gave a careful critique of the method of the scientific knowledge, which, with precipitate construction according to superficial antitheses, is not adequate to the task. The truest method, he affirms, is the dialectic, which makes the negative an immanent moment of development, because negation is not only negative, but at the same time positive; for its result is not pure nullity, but rather a higher determination, in which that which was denied is ideally preserved. Nothing is lost to this method, but it enriches itself, in its progress from negation to negation, by an equal number of positions. He expresses this thought in such a manner as to affirm that the philosopher must entirely abstract from himself, and in the movement of conception reserve for himself only the attitude of a spectator. 'Substance must be grasped as subject' – with these words, which have become so full of fate for his philosophy, he would indicate that the idea for itself is independent; that, although we think it, it determines itself entirely independent of us, and that its relation to other ideas can really proceed only from it and not from us. When, for example, we think the idea of identity, it, and not we, is the ground that the next idea is that of difference. It is not we who determine identity to difference, but identity determines itself to difference, for difference has a meaning only as difference of identity. The idea of identity moves, therefore, of itself to its opposite idea, to difference, and leaves to the philosopher only the observation of this process.

It is, in fact, the original sense of the word that substance in itself is subject. Substance here signifies the essential content, subject the form of knowledge. The subject must here be not the knowing philosopher, but the idea itself. Still the philosopher is also the subject which thinks the idea, but his thinking is not bound to the self-determination of the idea, into which the philosopher, with absolute renunciation of his own individual subjectivity, must think himself. Hegel's thought may be thus explained: in common logic, it is said that in judgment we join a predicate to a subject. In this the subject appears as passive, and receives the predicate through us. According to this logic, it is we who bind the predicate to the subject by the copula. Hegel reverses the matter by saying that it is the subject which determines itself to its predicate; for, if this be not the case, it is in vain that we join a predicate to a subject, because the judgment can be true only in so far as the predicate either inheres in the subject as a casual and relative determination, or is immanent in it as a necessary and absolute *natura sua*. When I judge, 'This circle is large', this judgment is true only in so far as greatness inheres in it. But greatness is only a relative determination in the relation of this circle to others. A circle may just as well be relatively small. If I judge, 'The circle is a self-enclosed curve', this judgment is a necessary, absolute

one, for without this determination the circle would not be a circle. Thus it is the idea of a circle itself that immanently determines itself to its predicate. It is not I who produce this idea, but the idea which produces itself in me. The predicate of the subject circle, by which it is a circle, does not depend upon me. I recognize it, I utter it, I make it my object; but I do not produce it. But the circle, because it is a circle, produces itself in the object.

By the example which I have just chosen, I am reminded that, in the Preface of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel would make of mathematics merely a science of the understanding, partly because its content, space in geometry, and unity in arithmetic, is so meagre, and partly because the construction of mathematics turns upon formal identity. A synthetic or an analytic course rather than the dialectic must be referred to mathematics. But when, as Hegel affirms, truth can become certain of itself only in the form of dialectic method; when further, according to him, mathematics forms a necessary member in the system of science; when, finally, it is the conception of space with which the idea as nature first found its existence – it is hard to see why mathematics should be an exception to all other content. That it never has been is no reason why it never should be treated dialectically. The conception of the one of quantity etc., i.e. of arithmetic, Hegel has already presented dialectically in the first part of his *Logic*: 'Why should geometry dispense with the dialectic?' Quantity does not even exclude qualitative distinctions, but is partly a moment of them and partly qualitatively distinguished in itself; for an arithmetical progression, for example, is not only qualitatively different from a geometrical progression, or the acute angle is not only quantitatively but qualitatively different from an obtuse angle. The one is smaller, the other larger, than a right angle; and just for this reason they are opposites in form. The lack of rational nature [*Begriffslosigkeit*], which Hegel charges upon quantity, is only relative. Through the integral and differential calculus, and through descriptive geometry, modern mathematics has in fact already become dialectic.

Hegel believed that an example of the dialectic method was afforded in the *Phenomenology* itself. Without boasting, yet with profound self-feeling, he expressed in the Preface the consciousness of having found that method which the future would confirm as the only true one. Though it be acknowledged that he is right, that henceforth without the dialectic method philosophy would no longer be in a condition to satisfy the conceptions of science, and that it no less than others cannot submit to an arbitrary treatment; still it cannot be denied that the method is open to great danger, and that is no less than others may degenerate to arbitrary treatment. The philosopher shall remain out of the question. The idea shall determine itself through itself, shall adopt nothing into itself from without. This is the postulate. It is, indeed, justified; but, in

fine, it is the philosopher even here who advances with his thoughts as thinking subject from conclusion to conclusion, and what he holds to be a necessary correlation describes as such. Just this description is the most dangerous moment, for its extent, its tone, its address remain more dependent upon the philosopher than its form would indicate. Experience has subsequently shown that the descriptive manner of the Hegelian school, especially through imitation of the *Phenomenology*, degenerated into a mere assertory procedure, which was in no respect better than the polarities of Schelling's philosophy, the antitheses and syntheses of Fichte's, or the categories of Kant. The dialectic, which was to have engendered the most active self-movement of science, stiffened into the most arbitrary and lifeless dogmatism, which often became the more contradictory the more it set up pretension to absolute infallibility. If the application of the dialectic method had been guarded from every error, Hegel himself, for instance, would not have set the example of altering the position of ideas in his system. Without the *Logic*, the danger would have become still greater.

For profound penetration into the essence of science, for sharp criticism of the delusions behind which scientism has taken refuge in order to preserve itself in the public mart as authority, for noble dignity of scientific temper, for spirited apprehension of the entire turning-point of the age – the Preface to Hegel's *Phenomenology* can only be compared with that which Kant introduced in the second edition of his *Critique of Reason*. This is its counterpart in literature.

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## The Science of Logic (1870)

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Karl Rosenkranz

Much as that which Hegel accomplished as pedagogue demands recognition; still, that which had greatest scientific significance, which he wrought out all in quiet during his rectorate, and which grew up to him partly from the ever newly *dictata* of which he made use in his lectures, was the elaboration of the *Logic*, which appeared, like the *Phenomenology*, at an unfavourable time, in the midst of the great war of nations in Europe.

The *Logic* should make only the beginning of the system of science, to which the *Phenomenology* had furnished an introduction in so far as it had had, as its result, from the development of consciousness, the conception of absolute knowledge. This standpoint of self-consciousness, in which the antithesis of subject and object was absolutely cancelled, was to unfold itself in the organic form of free, self-subsistent idea. Inasmuch as, in the depiction of the embryonic plan of the Hegelian system, the historical connection of his *Logic* with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* has been already given, we will here revert to this no further than is unavoidably necessary in order to characterize the position which Hegel's *Logic* assumes in science, and from which alone its form and its language can be rightly understood and judged.

The general problem transmitted from Kant to Hegel was to develop the idea of pure reason in the totality of its determinations in such a manner that the understanding, which with Kant remained master of reason and prescribed for it boundaries which it must not transcend, should subordinate itself to reason as its tool. To this end it was necessary to rescue the categories from the uncritical dead form in which they had been adopted by Kant from the old formal logic. The latter had selected its distinctions only empirically. There are, according to it, ideas, judgments, syllogisms, in manifold form, just as there are Negroes, Mongolians etc. in manifold varieties. The determinations were found ready made

in tradition, only always differently arranged by logicians, furnished with more or less illustrations, and in general brought into relation to more or less matter entirely foreign to themselves. Hegel now demanded that the idea of reason, as that of the logical idea, should develop itself in a connection in which every determination must be mediated as necessary, but at the same time, likewise, should mediate another. The categories could not, therefore, appear as fixed, unmoved conceptions of the understanding, but they are essentially dialectic, i.e. they pass through themselves over into other and opposite conceptions, quality into quantity, something into other, one into many, essence into appearance, ground into consequence, content into form, substantiality into causality, cause into effect, general into special etc. It must, therefore, be shown how an idea is changed in and through its development, i.e. how it advances to the idea which is the opposite of itself, which emerges from its sublation [dissolution] as its positive result; for negation does not come from without to the idea, but produces its negation itself from within outward. All ideas of pure reason make up, therefore, a system in which the lower is richer in extent but poorer in content, while the higher is poorer in extent and richer in content, inasmuch as the latter embraces in itself, as steps of its formation, all that have gone before it; for it is higher only in that it includes in itself all that is presupposed by it, through a determination which has power to transcend it and to sublimate it into itself. The higher step not only preserves the lower in itself, but also changes them, in that it elevates them to itself.

The correctness of this problem in apprehending the determinations of pure reason as dialectic is to be granted throughout. The science of logic, which treats of the laws of thought, contradicts itself when it presents these laws in a formless shape, as an inorganic mass, as a medley of fixed ideas. Thinking – the final ground of all motion, of all life – cannot be unmoved and lifeless in itself. Of the necessity of this problem, by the solution of which Kant's *Critique* was emancipated from the enchantment of the understanding, Hegel was entirely conscious, and so said that he must re-form the *Logic* from the very beginning.

The second special problem bequeathed from Kant to Hegel lay in the solution of the old metaphysics by means of logic. Fichte and Schelling, Kant's immediate successors, had neither a logic nor a metaphysics, but, with them all, the elements of these sciences had become moments of consciousness. Hegel returned to metaphysics within logic, by developing the categories of Kant, and by making them precede the idea of the universal. He declared the determinations, quality, quantity, relation, modality, to be definitions of Being in itself, as categories of objective logic, in distinction to idea, judgment, syllogism, as the moments of subjective logic. The metaphysics of logic should be made to consist in the fact that the latter is the ideal archetype of all reality. The idea of

pure reason is the *prius* of all concrete reality, which is rational only in so far as it is thought in itself, and is, therefore, thinkable for us. The idea as logical, to speak like Kant, is the ideal prototype of nature and of mind. In the idea of reason, for example, the pure idea of quality exists; in nature, qualities – red, yellow, sweet, sour, hard, soft, rough, smooth, heavy, light etc – exist. So also in mind, dull, shrewd, upright, false, strong, weak etc. The idea of quality in itself is, therefore, that of pure quality, because in that real quality it gains existence, but itself is no definite quality. The same is true of quantity.

Consequently, all those ideas must be excluded from logic which belong to nature or to mind, like the conception of life, which falls to nature; or the knowledge of the true, or the willing of the good, which fall to mind. In this Hegel is still biassed by Kant, who applied the dialectic to the ideas of soul, world and God. The idea of the absolute idea, purely as idea, Hegel seems not to have regarded as significant enough, and therefore he determined it further as life, and as knowledge of the true, and as willing of the good. The science of the logical idea must also, in conclusion, sublate [cancel] itself, i.e. pass over to nature; but it does not follow hence that it must itself develop the idea of life in which nature reaches itself as idea.

With respect to the idea of mind this difficulty exists, viz. that the idea of reason is unthinkable without that of mind, for reason is the totality of the abstract determinations of thinking, but thinking exists, *in actu*, only as the activity of a thinking subject; hence ordinary logic takes it up psychologically from the standpoint of knowledge, and inquires how we come to form ideas, judgments and syllogisms. But with the determinations of thinking as such, it is found that they are independent in themselves, and are valid not only for thinking, but for all being. They are law not merely for our ideal subjectivity, but no less for all real objectivity. It is by virtue of this that they can appear as the neutral indifference of nature and mind in the autonomy and autarchy of the logical idea; in which, however, it must not be forgotten that the principle of reason, the ground of its existence, is ultimately the absolute mind itself. When Hegel said in the Preface to his *Logic* that it presents the truth as it is unveiled, he sought this to express that the categories of reason are the absolute form, without which neither nature nor mind can be thought. It would be impossible to think the concrete – star, plant, animal, fantasy, action, family etc – without the abstract determination of reason; the latter are contained, therefore, in the concrete as its unity, difference, ground etc., but in a concrete manner; for nature and mind are not merely the veil of pure reason, as though they were related only externally to it, as though they presented only a masked reason, but, compared with the abstract form of reason, they are as it were higher forms of the idea. Hegelians misunderstand Hegel when they behave as



if in all philosophy only logic were ultimately concerned, of which nature and mind properly are only superfluous translations.

Still another expression of Hegel, in the same place, has led to many disputes. He said that the *Logic* could be regarded as the exposition of God as he was before the creation, of nature, and of the finite mind. This has been received as though he had put the conception of the logical idea in the place of God. All Hegelians who are pantheists, or atheists, or Logo-theists make the idea of God vanish in that of reason, and regard logic as the fortunate destruction of all theology. It is still not to be left out of account that Hegel himself distinguished, on the one hand, between reason and God, and, on the other, between God and the finite mind. He says that when we abstract from nature and from the finite mind, and therefore from ourselves, only the abstraction of pure thinking remains. God can be determined only as Logos. He is, then, pure Being, absolute essence, idea in itself. He would say that philosophy concerns itself only with definitions of the absolute, and that hence those of reason are in and for themselves divine. To obviate misunderstanding, he declared later in the *Encyclopaedia* that of the categories only the first and third, but not the second, could have validity as definitions of God; for only the former were affirmative, while the later, intermediate between them, was negative; for example, quality, quantity, measure, make up the ontological trichotomy. Thus I must think of God as the essence of all qualities as well as the measure of all things, but not as quantity, because as infinite he transcends all quantitative limitations; thus I must think of him as essence and reality, but not as phenomenon etc. Hegel exhibits here an imperfect reserve, which was first developed into greater clearness and distinctness in his lectures on the proofs of the existence of God.

The unmistakable enthusiasm with which Hegel was wont to speak of the *Logic* has its cause in the absolute interest of science, and of thinking in general, in the categories. Can these be fortuitous? Can there be now this, now that significance arbitrarily given to a category? Certainly not. In common life, to be sure, we carelessly use related categories promiscuously. We speak of something and thing, essence and substance, reality and actuality, ground and cause etc. as equivalents in meaning; but in science we must undertake a critical sifting. If these most general ideas are not fortuitous but necessary, they must hang together among themselves, and make up an accordant totality in which every determination results only from a mediation which concerns only it. The uncritical consciousness lays hold of now this, now that category, according to its needs, and operates therewith as well as it can; the scientific consciousness, on the contrary, renders account of the categories, and limits each to its appropriate sphere. We uncritically apply, for example, the category of *thingness* to every possible object. We apply it rightly in naming, for

example, a lump of sugar, or a thimble; but if anyone should name family, or state, or poetry, a thing, we should ourselves take offence in common conversational language. Hegel has, therefore, rightly apprehended the problem of the science of the logical idea, even if his solution of it may be contested in single points. It is impossible that those determinations, from the truth of which all other truth in thought depends, should not be necessary. My caprice must not decree what is to be understood by being, essence, phenomenon, content, form etc. My caprice cannot decide which idea has to develop itself earlier, which later, in this logical cosmos. Let it be undertaken with a single idea, in order to show the truth of what has been said. Let anyone undertake to say what effect is, and he is obliged to go back from it to cause. Can he rest at cause? No; cause leads to the idea of substance, which is active, and from which the change of being which we designate as effect arises. But what is substance? Substance is a reality subsisting through itself, in contrast to a merely accidental existence which definitely is only in and through another definite being. Thus, analytically, we can ever retrogress until we arrive at the general conception of Being, of pure Being without predicates, beyond or beneath which nothing more can be thought. Or, let the contrary method be followed. Let us ask ourselves: what arises from effect? Obviously, a new effect; i.e. the effect becomes itself, in turn, a cause. When an officer in a battle gives to his soldiers the command to *fire*, this word is an effect of his thinking, and considered as sound, of his vocal organs. But this effect becomes the cause of the soldiers' discharging their weapons. This effect becomes cause that, of the hostile soldiers, some are killed or wounded. This effect becomes cause that they either energetically resist the attack or flee etc. There arises, therefore, an infinite progress. At the same time the idea of cause and effect is changed into that of reciprocity; action invariably follows reaction etc. Thus thinking pursues its onward way synthetically through deduction, until here, too, it arrives at an ultimate, viz. the idea, which in the causal process of substances constitutes the principle of their activity. In the adduced example, one would proceed *in concreto* from soldiers to armies, from armies to nations, from nations to their wars, from wars to history, from history to freedom, which is the idea of mind. The process goes no further. All the remaining categories lie midway between the idea of the Being without predicates and that of the idea, which is the unity of the particular idea and its reality. Included in logic are the determinations of being, of essence, of idea, in all their differences – still themselves the content to the universality of which nature and history are related as examples.

Over against the fullness of the concrete idea in nature and history, the cosmos of the logical idea with its abstract categories appears in fact as a world of shadows. It is remarkable that Hegel is so often reproached

with offering up the world of blooming life to idea as to a desolate Hades. Can Hegel make the abstract something other than it is? Is not, then, this abstract contained in the concrete as its logical soul, just as the shades in Hades are not absolutely dead, but are departed souls that must drink blood in order to make themselves apprehensible? Hegel himself designated the logical ideas as pure essences, souls; and so, too, they are with him as they are in reality; but what is the logic of so many logicians? Not a Hades, in which souls longing for life drift about, but a church-yard, into which the bones of the corpses of ideas are desolately and promiscuously thrown.

If Hegel sought to present the connection of the categories as in itself self-producing, he must make each one appear analogously, as a special formation of the logical idea, the same as he did in the *Phenomenology* with the different standpoints of consciousness. It has been supposed that he changed categories into individualities, and reduced them to speculative poetical figures that waver past like the shapes in Goethe's masquerade procession. In order to gain a clear conception of Hegel's process, it is only necessary to institute the attempt to make any category develop itself with perfect objectivity, and without mixing in one's own personality. As soon as it is no longer said, for example we pass over now from quality to quantity, or, in another form, after we have disposed of the conception of quality, we come now to that of quantity etc.; but when quality shall sublate [develop] itself into quantity, it will be found that quite another language will be used. It will be seen how the idea of quality changes with each progressive distinction which is made, until finally through itself it projects the determination opposed to it (that of the indifferent external boundary) on itself, and thereby passes over into the category of quantity. It is true that Hegel has constructed a new language for logic; but this was a necessity, which moreover had the advantage of being truly German without lapsing into a fantastic purism. How far the effect of this most admirable language extends must by no means be overlooked. We read everywhere that the *Logic* was composed in a very dark, oracle-like tone, which must frighten the 'uninitiated' from its study; but far rather, such remarks themselves are intended to create the prejudice which frightens students from it. I will here extract a few passages at random from the *Logic*, and then let it be asked whether they are written plainly, whether they are German, whether they are in good taste, and how they should be written otherwise. In the doctrine of extensive and intensive *quantum*, for example in the elucidation of their difference, he says:

Degree is thus determinate magnitude, quantum, but not at the same time multitude, or the Plural within itself; it is only a plurality; plurality is the plural aggregated in simple determination, extant-being gone

back into being-for-self. Its determinateness must, indeed, be expressed by a number as the most perfect determinate being of quantum; but it is not a sum, but simple, only *one* degree. When we speak of 10, 20 degrees, the quantum which has so many degrees is the tenth, twentieth degree, and not the amount or sum of the same: in that case it would be extensive; but it is only *one*, the tenth, twentieth degree. It contains the determinateness which lies in the enumeration 10, 20, but does not contain it as plural; but it is the number as sublated [cancelled] enumeration, as simple determinateness.

What is there to be changed in this? We take the liberty of extracting from the doctrine of the idea of Actuality another passage, in which the difference between might [*Macht*] and power [*Gewalt*] is described:

Power [external constraint] is the phenomenon of might, or it is might as external. Might is, however, external only in so far as the causal substance, in its action, i.e. in its positing of itself, is at the same time presupposing, i.e. posits itself as sublated. Hence, conversely, an act of power is none the less an act of might. It is only an Other presupposed by itself upon which the powerful cause works; its working thereon is negative relation to itself, or the manifestation of itself. The passive is independent, which is only posited; something broken within itself – a reality which is condition, and, indeed, condition in its truth, viz. a reality which is only a possibility; or, conversely, inherent being, that is, only determinateness of inherent being, only passive. It is, hence, not only possible, but necessary, for him on whom power is exerted to exert power; whatever has power over another has it because it is the might thereof, which thereby manifests itself and the other. Passive substance is posited by power only as that which it in truth is, especially because it is the simple Positive or immediate substance only in order to be posited. The prerogative of being a condition is the semblance of immediateness, which real causality strips off it. Through the penetrating influence of another power, justice is thus done to passive substance. What it loses is the above immediateness, substantiality foreign to it. What it receives as foreign to it, viz. to become determined as a posited being, is its own determination.

How plainly and how strikingly all this is said! Let the experiment be made on one example to see whether Hegel's inflections must necessarily be used. The vital, for example, is the might which exerts power upon the inorganic world; the inorganic – air, light, water etc. – is immediately present over against the Vital; the Vital presupposes it as its condition. But in laying hold on it, it ceases to be self-subsisting in respect to the might of life, and is sublated by it. In this sublation, might manifests

itself as power, which manifests at the same time itself and that which it determines as passive to it. Thus the sculptor who exerts power upon a block of marble, in order to make a statue of it; thus the teacher who exerts power upon the intelligence of a child, in order to make therefrom a cultivated understanding etc. In this metaphysical category morality is, of course, not involved; might may not conduct itself with injustice, as if *potestas* and *jus* were ethically the same, but only causality is involved. Ordinary consciousness receives much only from the side of activity or passivity, without bringing both determinations together in the unity of reciprocity. Men complain, for example, that the state exerts power in taxation, or in enforcing military duty; but forget that the state is their own substance, without which they can possess no property and would enjoy no personal safety. How far a government may impose too many burdens on the citizens etc. is another question.

Hegel's style made great progress in the *Logic*. The language of the *Phenomenology*, full of spirit, pervaded with an ironical tone, artistic in bold pictures, often highly pathetic in its descriptions, mystic in its imagery, only recurs when Hegel regards indignantly the want of confidence in the mind to recognize truth, or the frippery of formal logic, or the hypocrisy and bad pre-eminence of positive sciences. Otherwise he writes entirely to the point, and with pedagogical regard for his readers. Neither does he fail, at important points, to adduce the history of science, and to show how the idea of being-in-itself belongs to the Eleatics; that of becoming, to Heraclitus; that of the One, to Leucippus and Democritus; that of quantity, to Pythagoras; that of measure, of identity, of difference, and of ground, to Leibnitz; that of the Negative, to the sceptics; that of the thing-in-itself, and of phenomenon, to Kant; that of content and form, of matter and form, to Aristotle; that of substance, to Spinoza; that of the general idea, to Plato; that of the absolute idea, to Plato, Aristotle and Kant. His *Logic* allowed no true principle of science which had ever made an epoch in its history to escape it. But that which appears in the history of philosophy in connection with a thousandfold other relations enters the *Logic* as a simple idea in its systematic place.

Where it seemed necessary to him, he made remarks and digressions, of which that upon the idea of the differential calculus, under the category of quantitative infinity, is one of the most weighty, to which, in the second edition of the *Logic*, only that upon Berzelius' theory of chemical affinity, and Berthollet's critique, can be compared. He would never have resolved upon such a casual, loose form of expression in the *Phenomenology*; for that needed to be a plastic, definite, beautifully articulated work of art. Now clearness of understanding was his supreme aim; the aesthetic design, to form out of the *Logic* a scientific work of art, was not lost sight of, but it became subordinate to didactic necessity.

As pedagogue, he had learned also the art of exemplification, and

knew how to make good use of it in the *Logic*. He had acquired the tact of remarking where and how an illustration was necessary to the reader. He speaks, for example, of the formal syllogism, and seeks to show that it can attribute to the same subject contradictory determinations because it can make of the different sides of the subject a *medius terminus*. The conclusion can accordingly be correct in form, yet false in content. This he explains by illustrations:

When from the *medius terminus* of sensuousness the conclusion is reached that man is neither good nor bad, because neither the one nor the other can be predicated of the sensuous, this is correct; but the concluding clause is *false*, because of man as concrete the *medius terminus* of spirituality is no less valid. From the *medius terminus* of the gravity of the planets, satellites and comets towards the sun, it duly follows that these bodies fall into the sun; yet they do not fall into it, because they are in equal degree their own centre of gravity, or, as we say, they are impelled by centrifugal force. Also, from the *medius terminus* of the sociality, community of goods of citizens can be deduced; but from the *medius terminus* of individuality, when it is driven into like abstraction, the dissolution of the state ensues, as has been the case, for example with the German Empire, because it has adhered to the latter *medius terminus*. There is, in short, nothing which is held to be so insufficient as such a formal conclusion, because it reposes upon chance or upon arbitrariness, which *medius terminus* is to be made use of. When such a deduction has spun off through conclusions ever so finely, and its correctness has been fully granted, still it leads at least to nothing; for the fact ever remains that other *medii termini* arise, from which the exact opposite can with equal propriety be deduced. Kant's antinomies of reason are nothing else than that, from a conception, now one of its determinations is made fundamental, and now, with equal necessity, the other.

Hegel opposed logical formulism. It is quite erroneous to think that he despised the forms of formal logic; on the contrary, he respected them as products of mind, which, in his estimation, was higher than nature. Hence he expressly took them under his protection, and said:

If it is thought not unimportant to have discovered more than sixty species of the parrot, and thirty-seven species of the veronica etc., the discovery of forms of reason must be esteemed still more important. Is not a figure of logical syllogism something infinitely higher than a species of parrot, or veronica?

Hegel has repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that no true determi-

nation of formal logic is lost in speculative logic, but that, rather, the former is dialectically reproduced in the latter. When, for example, formal logic posits the idea of the general, special and individual, it describes these determinations in part psychologically, in part grammatically, until it forgets this, and suddenly treats them as in-and-for themselves independent. It commences psychologically. It calls upon consciousness to abstract from the Manifold in immediate contemplation; thereby the unity which exists in the Manifold is attained; this identity is the generality which therefore appears as the product of an act of theoretical intelligence. The general is the idea. Now it proceeds to combining conceptions into judgments. This combination is again an act of consciousness; it is not the conceptions which combine themselves, but it is the thinking subject which brings together into a proposition those which are taken as external to one another. Thereby logic becomes grammatical. It names the judgments expressly, logical sentences, *enunciationes*, *propositiones*. It is the thinker who joins the predicate – or, more properly, any predicate – to the subject, in that he ties it to it with the copula. The copula is, in turn, regarded as a bond which is external and indifferent alike to the subject and to the predicate, although it unites both. In the syllogism, formal logic combines judgments with one another by deriving from the relation of two judgments with each other a third as result. Hence they can no longer affirm their subjectivity, for the dependence of the determinations upon each other, and therewith the metaphysical element of logic, come here to light. The so-called rules of inference express nothing but the independence of the idea towards the thinking subject. *Ex propositionibus mere negativis nihil sequitur. Ex propositionibus mere particularibus nihil sequitur*. But why not? In the first case, because the affirmative nature of the idea forbids it; in the second, because the special cannot be subsumed under the special, but only under the general. *Quid valet de omnibus, valet etiam de singulis*; because in the idea, generality is identical with individuality. *A majori ad minus, non a minori ad majus valet consequentia*; of course, because the individual must contain determinations which are not in the special; and the special, distinctions which are not expressly posited in the general. Logic recognizes here, therefore, that ideas determine themselves so that, when their objective relations are not attended to, the conclusion has no validity. It finds itself compelled also to distinguish the essential from the unessential characteristics; qualitative from quantitative; positive from negative; substantiality from causality; possibility from actuality; chance from necessity; i.e. the entire metaphysics breaks suddenly into logic, and is smuggled in, now here, now there, in the form of abrupt definitions. Once arrived at this point, logic falls into the opposite extreme of subjectivity with which it psychologically began. In the figures of the syllogism it began to calculate by means of ideas. Calculating is, in fact, thinking, as Bardili said in his

*Logic*, with which he would cure 1800 as with a *medicina mentis* of Kant's *Critique of Reason*. 'Whoever calculates thinks.' With these words he begins his *Logic*. The arithmetic of numerical relations in nature and history shows us that they have been reckoned, that they rest upon syllogisms, and that they therefore betray a subject which has thought them; but in the form of thinking as mere reckoning the vitality of the idea is destroyed, for, in order to be able to reckon, the moments of the idea must be reduced to dead *quantums*. Hence Hegel declares himself decidedly opposed to that tendency in logic which would transmute thinking into reckoning, like Ploucquet's *Calculus* etc., although he knows that reckoning without thinking at all is impossible. On the contrary, he took pains, in the third part of his *Logic*, especially at the beginning, and in the first chapter of the first division, to describe the dialectic nature of the idea. This is unquestionably one of the most difficult problems which he attempted to solve. Many readers have been frightened away from the Hegelian logic because they became giddy in this constant transition of opposite into opposite. They were accustomed to have general and special and individual nicely distinguished side by side, but now Hegel comes and shows them (1) that all three determinations are moments of one idea; (2) that just for that reason each of them contains both the others in itself; (3) that every moment is equal to every other in value, and that nevertheless they are found in subordination; (4) that therefore the conception of general, special and individual is distinguished, but that the perfect, true conception can be only the totality, the concrete unity of these distinctions. The general is also the special, for it distinguishes itself from itself, and it is this distinction which we call the special. But the general is also the individual, for without having it for a content the realization of the special into an existence independent in itself would be only a unit, not an individual. This individual is also thus itself again the general. Each moment of the total idea is, as determined, not what the others are, but at the same time as a moment of the whole no less is what they are.

Mathematicians do each other the justice, or at least the fairness, of admiring, in the work of others, even the elegance with which a problem is treated. From such a recognition philosophy is yet far removed. It allows the difficulties with which its presentation has to contend to be so little suspected, because it uses language accessible to all. The art with which Hegel has described the idea has been as yet but poorly estimated. We are wont to speak as if the 'Hegelian idea' were something quite apart, which he construed in his *Logic*, while it really contains the objective thoughts which have absolutely nothing to do with the casual individuality of the thinker. The Hegelian idea is really the idea of idea, and no speculative idiosyncrasy.



## Relation of the Logic to the Phenomenology

Phenomenology was to constitute the *first part of the system of science*. In the first edition this title stood first. *Phenomenology of mind* was placed underneath, as designating the content of the first part.

In the Preface as well as in the Introduction to logic, Hegel mentioned expressly the phenomenology and its relation to logic, especially that it should present the *arising* of the standpoint of absolute knowledge, in which the antithesis of subject and object has vanished, and from which, therefore, knowing should begin as pure science without antithesis. Within the perfected system, of course, phenomenology could not appear with the fullness with which at first it had absorbed the entire kingdoms of nature and mind into itself; for in the systematic totality this same content appears in a simple organic form, uninvolved in the struggle of consciousness to master its own essence in it. Phenomenology shows us how mind as consciousness, as individuality, as ethics, as right, as morality, as religion, as art, as science stands related as opposed to nature, so far as it seeks to find the reality of its idea in these forms, until it arrives at absolute knowledge, as the absolute unity of the subject with the object, because the object has here become the absolute itself, in the absolute form itself of the idea. In the system of science phenomenology could, therefore, become only a moment of the sphere of the subjective mind, of ordinary so-called psychology. The stages – consciousness, self-consciousness, reason – were here the essentials.

Just before his death, Hegel began to revise the *Phenomenology* for a second edition, but he reached scarcely the middle of the Preface. In its main features he left it much the same, but crossed out those passages which referred to the intended second part of the system. The suppression of these has been explained as if he had thereby retracted the original relation of the phenomenology as the mediation of the standpoint from which logic proceeds for thinking consciousness. This, however, does not follow; but merely that, since the publication of his system had taken place in other than the intended manner, the said announcement had lost its significance.

Hegel orally designated the *Phenomenology* in Berlin as the work which he had made his 'voyage of discovery'. This expression can relate only to the concrete content of nature and history which he wrought over in it, and not to the general idea of consciousness, which also retained the same moments in the system of the philosophy of mind. Hegel conceded, however, by that expression that he could have brought in a still more extended content into the *Phenomenology* than he did. When, later, he reduced the relation of the knowing subject to speculation (so far as concerns the beginning of speculative thinking) to the transition through scepticism and to the simple resolution to will to think the truth

absolutely, it must not be forgotten that no one would come to this resolve whose consciousness had not previously in some way completed in experience all its other content.

Hegel's division of consciousness remained (1) consciousness, (2) self-consciousness, (3) rational self-consciousness. To this, the following division of the *Logic* would correspond: (1) objective logic, (2) subjective logic, (3) absolute logic. The first would have contained the categories of being in general; the second, the moments of the idea; the third, the canon of the absolute idea. That Hegel confounded this trichotomy with another in the *Logic* – viz, being, essence, idea – is explained by the fact that he distinguished the idea of idea itself again into (1) the subjective, (2) the objective, (3) the idea. Hence one of the greatest difficulties of the *Logic* has arisen. We will here touch only upon the point adduced by criticism, that the same categories occur in the *Phenomenology* and in the *Logic*; so that the *Logic* was properly already contained in the *Phenomenology*.

This is quite right, but it cannot be otherwise. First, the content of phenomenology, as well as that of every other science, is formally ruled by logic. It cannot dispense with logical forms, which must therefore become manifest in its articulation. Second, the logical categories must themselves become objects of consciousness in concrete forms. Consciousness must, in the course of its culture, become master of the idea of logical forms. The existence of the logical in the concrete matter of consciousness cannot be excluded from its experience. Sensuous certainty, for example, cannot do otherwise than make being, as definite, its object. The senses make their appearance as the mediation of the certainty that something now and here looks red, tastes sweet or feels smooth etc.; but sense does not know that this something, as red, is distinguished from another, for example a green something. This knowing is an act of consciousness which distinguishes that excitation of the nerves of sight which we designate as red from another as green. The animal does not attain this objectivization of its sensations, but rests in sensation. Red and green are distinguished even for the eye of the animal, but the animal cannot conclude *this is red*. It does not know that red is a different colour from green. It knows nothing of *here* and *now*. It knows nothing of an individual object. It is, indeed, a self-feeling individualization, but knows not itself as subject in opposition to an object. It is consciousness which makes the sensuous an object, and thereby becomes certain of itself, i.e. knows being as distinct, as *this definite being*. Thus apprehension cannot perfect itself without the categories of the essential and the unessential, of the thing and its properties etc.

### The essential and the unessential in the Hegelian method

The great problem which Hegel proposed in his *Logic* centred itself about his conception of the dialectic method, which he regarded as the only true one. It consisted in the Platonic method, made profound by the method of Aristotle's metaphysics, and more accurately determined by the forms of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Subjectively it was to constitute the absolute organ of all genuine knowing, but objectively it was also to contain the immanent rhythm of ontological development which is immanent in reality. What Kant had distinguished on the one side as understanding, judgment and reason and on the other as idea, reflection and syllogism was to become united in the abstract, reflected and speculative determinations of the logical idea. Its course was to be not merely analytic from the individual to the general, not merely synthetic from the general to the individual, but regressive and progressive at the same time, because the general unity was to distinguish itself from itself, and only ultimately to be determined to its genuine concrete idea. In the treatment of the *Phenomenology* and of the *Logic*, Hegel himself gave an example of this method. He had made the idea expound itself, and thereby build itself up to a new idea. Idea as such is identical with itself, but through its differentiation it produces new ideas, and in that degree changes itself.

This must be rightly understood. The idea of a point, for example, is always the same; but in so far as the point moves, it begets another, the other of itself, in which it sublates itself as the true. The line again, by moving in different ways, produces the difference of straight and crooked. The point makes itself analytically a line, but synthetically it remains contained in it; the line makes itself analytically a straight or a crooked line, but synthetically it is posited as a line in the one as well as in the other. The soul of this dialectic was thus here, as with Plato and Aristotle, the negative of the idea, the antithesis which is brought forth out of itself. This is the incontrovertible truth of this process. Closely connected with this, however, is the unessential, so easily possible in its presentation, viz. error in regard to that which is posited as the negative. Hegel's thought strove towards the absolute independence of the idea from the philosopher. The part of the latter should be only that of looking on its movement. In the above illustration it is not I who make the point become a line; but it itself, by moving itself, produces itself as a line. I look upon this its self-formation. This highest ideal of all scientific investigation was not insured in its realization against the contingency of the philosopher, for here in the transition from the general to the special the distinction necessary in itself could very easily be varied, and the immanent antithesis be falsified. Even the abstract generality might be transposed with the concrete, the first with the last. Then, despite all claim

of infallibility, the method fell into fallacious construction. In Hegel himself examples may be found where he is deluded and vacillating in this respect: for example in the *Philosophy of Right*, under the conception of the state power, he has set up royal sovereignty as the first, therefore abstract moment; while in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia* it is the final and concrete moment.

Among the adherents of Hegel, the differences are still greater. Opponents of his philosophy receive these as proof of the falsity of his method, while the ground lies only in its uncritical use. Hegel wished manifestation of the idea, but the school often fell back to the mere construction of the philosophy of Schelling through precipitate and external application of the logical categories. That which can be called the unessential in Hegel's method has been especially evoked by the fact that the idea of antithesis became confounded with that of contradiction. Hegel took up the antinomy from Kant's dialectic with great satisfaction. While Kant placed contradiction only in our knowledge, Hegel said it should belong also to actuality itself. Contradiction, as real, is also possible, and can therefore become actual. It is not merely a phenomenon of our intelligence. Hegel now affirmed that, in the development of the idea, antinomies everywhere present themselves which must be solved into a higher unity. He did not intend to explain the contradiction as that which is true, for that which is true cannot contradict itself, but he discerned the foundation of all life, of all activity, in the fact that in the phenomenal world antithesis grew into contradiction, which latter manifested the unity in whose depth it sank away. The higher a particular being stands, and the more sides it has, so much the more easily can it involve itself in manifold contradictions. Hegel, therefore, took up contradiction as a constitutive moment into his system, and aroused endless contradiction thereby, because by this it was customary to understand the absurdity of something unthinkable, logically impossible. Contradiction is also antithesis; but antithesis as such, brought to the tension of negative actuality versus identity, is not contradiction, but in the world of phenomena it may every moment become contradiction. The antithesis of positive and negative electricity is in itself ever and everywhere present, but only in the thunderstorm does it become a contradiction which solves itself in lightning. Egoness, as individualization of mind, is immediately antithetical to its universality, but it becomes bad only when it negates it *in actu* and with consciousness. Physical selfishness is not yet ethical egotism. It cannot be denied that Hegel's philosophy has not distinguished the contradictory, the contrary and the repugnant with sufficient care, and has caused confusion thereby; but still less can it be denied that the zeal which could again exile contradiction from philosophy without surmounting it has resulted in the most lamentable shallowness.

The idea in-and-for-itself is, to be sure, without contradiction; but in

its development, contradiction produces itself in the steps of transition. It must, therefore, always be measured on the higher. Eudemonism is the quite consequent issue of psychology. In itself there is nothing contradictory in being happy, in the satisfaction of one's instincts and appetites, but this principal leads to the contradiction of pleasure with itself, and this contradiction is solved not by psychology but by ethics. Man shall be more than happy – he shall be free.

When, therefore, Hegel is reproached with discerning truth in contradiction, an error is made; the contradiction which begets itself is in the same degree sublated; unity continues, not only negative but affirmative, through the totality of the development. The unity with which an idea begins is abstract identity; from this proceeds its difference; these station themselves over against one another in order to sublate themselves into a higher unity. Thus backwards this is concrete, but forwards it manifests itself as a contradiction which sinks away in the depth of a higher unity opposed to it, which nevertheless in the beginning of its formation, or immediately, is only an abstract identity. The abstract in-and-for-itself is without contradiction, but the different steps of the phenomenal universe, re-interlinked with one another through contradiction (since it demands solution) into living unity.

That which is true, therefore, in the Hegelian method is the unrest of the negative, which makes its appearance in every sphere save that of the pure absolute. But this unrest is at the same time full of the repose which accrues to every moment of the whole as necessary and for itself positive. The higher step negates that which is presupposed and lower, and includes it in itself (as Hegel was wont to say) as its negative identity, but does not destroy it in its relative independence. When, for example, man as a microcosm comprehends the macrocosm of all nature compendiously in himself, the persistence of nature in itself is not destroyed.

The transition of one idea to another is no gradual metamorphosis as students of nature so readily seek to derive the origin of new forms by successive transformation of those already existing, but the existence of the higher grade is posited through the idea of the idea. The lower grade often reveals types in which the higher already has its analogy. It is the types which may deceive, but they are only the humoristic prelude, not yet the thing itself: as the Rosaceae envelope their kernel with the superfluity of a flesh which is yet not real, feeling flesh; as the ape seems to foreshadow the human form, yet is separated from man by an impassable gulf; as relief extends picture-like over surfaces, but is as yet no painting. Hegel could not call his method merely synthetic, because the higher step is the teleological ground of the lower; in its execution, however, which he was not able himself to carry on to its completion – i.e. in the lectures published after his death – he has often, it is true, contented himself with a synthetic derivation. Here, then, as with Spi-

noza, dogmatism entered, and in such a manner that presentation not infrequently sunk into that form which Hegel most abhorred in philosophy – to narration; in the school this increased still more – the trichotomies of the idea were decreed only in an assertorical manner. The discipline of thought, as Hegel had named the method, was quite thrown off to make way for the most motley anarchy.

### The *Encyclopaedia*

It was natural that a mind which found itself upon so high a standpoint of scientific unity must approach the wish to live in a sphere adequate to itself. Hegel longed for academic activity. The favour of fortune came to him in various offers. He had already decided upon Heidelberg, when notice was also taken of him from Berlin.

There were especially two men, quite opposed to each other, who were instrumental in his appointment, Paulus and Daub. With the first he had stood in relations of personal friendship since Jena. With the latter he became acquainted in Heidelberg, and through him was gradually alienated from Paulus, who observed the fact with great displeasure. Paulus was the most decided opponent of Romanticism, and could not pardon Hegel's sympathy for Daub and Creuzer, which he, in common with Voss, construed into a suspicion of crypto-Catholicism. Hegel had never expressed himself publicly against Paulus, but Paulus persecuted him, when he was dead, in pamphlets and periodicals, and especially in a work which he entitled *Geister revue*. He waged this polemic under the name 'Magis amica veritas'. Many bitter things which were retailed, ever more sarcastically, ever in wider circulation, owe their origin to their attacks under this pseudonym.

In Heidelberg, Hegel must have felt the necessity of giving to the public a presentation of his philosophy in its totality, for the *Phenomenology of Mind* had been a propaedeutic work, and logic had been only the first part of his system. Both were, moreover, in a dialectic form so strict that they could have been understood only by the narrow circle of philosophers. Hegel's predecessor in Heidelberg had been Fries. With his totally different apprehension of speculation, it was necessary for Hegel to take pains to present in outline to the students the difference of his philosophy from that of Fries, at least in its chief moments. He proposed, therefore, a guide for his lectures which he named *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*.

By the word 'Encyclopaedia' he wanted, as he himself said, to designate the unity of science, which composes a circle of circles. Beginning from itself, it widens itself to ever new determinations, which at the same time constitute deeper insights of the principle, until an ultimate stage is

attained beyond which progress cannot be made, and with which knowing reverts into its beginning. Ever since Bacon, European science has striven towards totality. Since he had given to it only a psychological foundation in reason, memory and fantasy, the unity remained external. The French *Encyclopaedia* of Diderot and D'Alembert followed out, in the organization of sciences, essentially the plan of Bacon, but split up in execution into the atomistic multiplicity of the alphabetical article. In Germany, the division of the Leibnitz-Wolff philosophy into theoretical and practical sciences had acquired validity and had been adopted by Kant, although he set up a higher division in the Architectonic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: the physiology of pure reason, the metaphysics of nature and the metaphysics of ethics – or science of the idea of that which should be in general, of that which is, and of that which should be. This trichotomy Hegel elevated to the distinct grasp of the idea, (1) as logic, (2) as nature, (3) as mind. Every system since then, which in the place of this simple articulation would place another, has fallen. One very important step of Hegel was the presentation of natural philosophy. It should, consequently, have followed the Logic as an independent whole. Now it appears as an integral part of the total cycle of sciences, in an abbreviated form, which scarcely suffices to make clear the inner connection of nature with the idea as logic and as mind.

Still more scanty and difficult of understanding was the composition of the last part of the philosophy of mind. Its division into the idea of the subjective, objective and absolute mind was, to be sure, of convincing simplicity; but the presentation of absolute mind as art-religion, revealed religion and philosophy must at once awaken doubt. Why was art apprehended at the same time as religion? Why was religion as revealed distinguished from the idea of religion in general? Why was the absoluteness of knowledge placed only in philosophy, which, as human activity, is not yet free from ignorance, error and doubt, i.e. is infected with problematic knowing? Why was it not plainly enunciated whether the absolute mind also exists in-and-for-itself as subject, or whether Hegel under this word had in view only art, religion and science, within the phenomena of the human mind? In the enigmatical paragraphs, only one very scanty extract from the last chapter of the *Phenomenology* can be detected. We shall see later what weighty consequences are attached to this indistinctness.

As Hegel wished to give a clue for his lectures, he omitted the proper dialectic development, and gave only a list of definitions in which he had much practice in the notes for the philosophical propaedeutics at the gymnasium, and had attained great skill in using modes of expression. This form, moreover, has not been without influence upon the school, because it favoured its dogmatism and abjured stricter philosophy. It is no exaggeration to affirm that, with the exception of Euclid, no textbook

exists of such concentrated precision. Every word in this laconic language is freighted with meaning.

To logic, natural philosophy and psychology, Hegel appended remarks in which he gave a trenchant criticism of those views which contradicted his own. In this way he skilfully incited readers to free reflection.



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**Extract from *The Secret of Hegel* (1865)**

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J. H. Stirling

**The Secret of Hegel**

A

The paper from which the present chapter principally derives, superscribed 'The secret of Hegel', and signalized by formality of date etc., has the tone of the contemporaneous record of some just-made discovery. This discovery, if not quite complete – not yet 'the secret' definitively *home* – has certainly still its value, especially to the advancing learner; but the *tone* is too spontaneous and extemporaneous to be pleasant now, and would, of itself, necessitate – did no interest of the learner interfere – considerable rescission, if not total suppression. Nevertheless, the interest of the learner shall be considered paramount, and the *tone* shall not be allowed to pretermitt the paper itself: only, to avoid respective suicide, we shall give such turn to its statements as shall break the edge of what egoism the solitary student may exhibit to himself on emerging into the new horizon which, crowning his own efforts, the new height has suddenly opened to him.

'This morning' – it is thus the paper a little grandiloquently opens 'the secret of Hegel has at length risen clear and distinct before me, as a planet in the blue'; glimpses, previous glimpses, with inference to the whole, it admits; but it returns immediately again to 'this morning', when 'the secret genesis of Hegel stood suddenly before me'.

'Hegel', the paper continues, 'makes the remark that he who perfectly reproduces to himself any system is already beyond it; and precisely this is what he himself accomplished and experienced with reference to Kant.' Now this is to be applied to the writer of the paper itself, who seems to think that he too has reproduced Kant, and that, accordingly, he had been 'lifted on this reproduction into sight of Hegel'. But the pretension of the position does not escape him. Surely, he goes on to soliloquize,

he cannot consider himself the first, surely he cannot consider himself the only one who has reached this vision, surely he cannot have the hardihood to say that Rosenkranz and Schwegler, for example, do not understand the very master in the study and exposition of whom they have employed their lives! No, he cannot say that – that would be too much; such men must be held to understand Hegel, and even infinitely better than at this moment he, who has still so much of the details to conquer. Still, it appears, he cannot help believing that there is a certain truth on his side, and that, even as regards these eminent Hegelians, so far as he has read them, he himself is the first who has discovered the whole secret of Hegel, and this because he is the first, perhaps, to see quite clearly and distinctly into the origin and genesis of his entire system – from Kant.

The manner in which these writers (we allow the manuscript to go on pretty much in its own way now), and others the like, work is not satisfactory as regards the reproduction of a system which shall not only be correct and complete in itself, but which shall have the life and truth and actual breath in it that it had to its own author. Their position as regards Hegel, for example, is so that, while to him his system was a growth and alive, to them it is only a fabrication and dead. They take it to pieces and put it up again like so much machinery, so that it has always the artificial look of manufacture at will. They are *professors*, in short, and they study philosophy and expound philosophy as so much *business*. All that they say is academical and professional; we hear only, as it were, the cold externality of division and classification for the instruction of boys. Such reproductions as theirs hang piecemeal on the most visible and unsatisfactory wires. They are not reproductions in fact; they are but artificial and arbitrary reassemblages. But to reassemble the limbs and organs of the dead body of any life is not to re-create that life, and only such re-creation is it that can enable us to understand any system of the past. In the core-hitting words of Hegel himself, 'instead of occupying itself with the business in hand, such an industry is ever over it and out of it; instead of abiding in it and forgetting itself in it such thinking grasps ever after something else and other, and remains rather by its own self than that it is by the business in hand, or surrenders itself to it'.

That these men, and others the like, have very fairly studied Hegel, and very fairly mastered Hegel, both in whole and detail, we doubt not at all; neither do we at all doubt that many of them very fairly discern the general relations, though they are inclined to underrate, perhaps, the particular obligations, of Hegel to Kant. Still there is something – knowing all this, and admitting all this, and acknowledging, moreover, that no claim had probably ever yet a more equivocal look, we feel still as if we must – in short, the claim of discovery is repeated.

For that there is a secret of Hegel, and that there is a key necessary to this secret, we verily believe Rosenkranz and Schwegler would themselves admit; thereby, at all events, leaving vacant space for us to occupy, if we *can*, and granting, on the whole, the unsatisfactoriness which we have already imputed to the statement or keys offered by themselves. Yes, there is a secret, and every man feels it, and every man asks for the key to it – every man who approaches even so near as to look at this mysterious and inexplicable labyrinth of Hegel. Where does it begin, we ask, and how did it get this beginning, and what unheard of thing is this which is offered us as the clue with which we are to guide ourselves? And what extraordinary yawning chasms gape there where we are told to walk as on a broad smooth bridge connecting what to us is unconnected and incapable of connection! There is no air in this strange region; we gasp for breath; and, as Hegel himself allows us to say, we feel as if we were upside down, as if we were standing on our heads. What then is all this? and where did it come from? and where does it take us to? We cannot get a beginning to it; it will not join on to anything else that we have either seen or heard; and, when we throw ourselves into it, it is an element so strange and foreign to us that we are at once rejected and flung out – out to our mother earth again, like so much rubbish that can neither assimilate nor be assimilated.

Yes, something very strange and inexplicable it remains for the whole world; and yet excites so vast an interest, so intense a curiosity that academies offer rewards for explanations of it, and even pay the reward, though they get no more satisfactory response than that 'the curtain is the picture'. How is this? When, as it were, deputations are sent to them for the purpose, how is it that his own countrymen cannot give such an intelligible account of Hegel as shall enable Frenchmen and Englishmen to understand what it is he really means to say? Yet the strange inconsistency of human nature! Though this be an admitted fact *now*, we have heard, years ago, from his chair, a Paris professor (Saisset) declare his conscientious hatred of Hegel, and his resolution to combat him to the death, and this too in the interest of *spiritualism*. Why the hatred, and why this resolution, if Hegel were not understood? And why treat as the enemy of spiritualism a man whose first word and whose last is Spirit, and only for the establishment of the existence of Spirit? And in England, too, we are not less inconsequent. Sir William Hamilton, even years ago, was reputed to have entertained the notion that he had refuted Hegel, and yet Sir William Hamilton, at that time, knew so little of the position of Hegel, with whom his *pretensions*, nevertheless, claimed evidently the most intimate relations, that he classes him with Oken – as a disciple of Schelling!

Sir William Hamilton, however, is not alone here: there are others of his countrymen who at least do not willingly remain behind him in

precipitate procacity and pretentious levity. A knowledge of Kant, for example, that is adequate to the distinction of *speculative* and *regulative*! feels itself still strong enough to refute Hegel, having melted for itself his words into meaning at length – *by distilling* them! Another similar example shall tell us that it knows nothing of Hegel, and yet shall immediately proceed, nevertheless, to extend an express report on the Hegelian system; knowing nothing here, and telling us no more, it yet shall crow over Hegel, in the most triumphant and victorious fashion, vouchsafing us in the end the information that Hegel's works are in *twelve* volumes! and whispering in our ear the private opinion that Hegelianism is a kind of freemasonry, kept secret by the adepts in their grudge to spare others the labour it cost themselves!

Besides these German scholars who, in England, are situated thus with respect to Hegel, there is another class who, unable to read a word of German, will yet tell you, and really believe they are speaking truth the while, that they know all about Kant and Hegel, and the whole subject of German Philosophy. This class grounds its pretensions on General Literature. They have read certain review articles, and perhaps even certain historical summaries; and, knowing what is there said on such and such subjects, they believe they know these subjects. There never was a greater mistake! To sum up a man, and say he is a pantheist, is to tell you not one single thing about him. Summaries only propagate ignorance, when used independently, and not merely relatively, as useful synopses and reminders to those who have already thoroughly mastered the whole subject in the entirety of its details.

A large class say, we do not want to go into the bottom of these things, we only want a general idea of them, and we only want to be *well-informed people*. This does not appear unreasonable on the whole, and there are departments of knowledge where general ideas can be given, and where these ideas can be used very legitimately in general conversation. But such general ideas are entirely impracticable as regards the modern philosophical *systems*. No general idea can convey these; they must be swallowed in whole and in every part – intellectually swallowed. We must pick up every crumb of them, else we shall fare like the princess in the Arabian story, who is consumed to ashes by her necromantic adversary, because unhappily she had failed to pick up, when in the form of a bird, all the fragments which her enemy, in the course of their contest, had tumbled himself asunder into.

To say Kant's is the Transcendental or Critical Idealism; Fichte's, the Subjective Idealism; Schelling's, the Objective Idealism; and Hegel's, the Absolute Idealism: this is as nearly as possible to say nothing! And yet people knowing this much and no more will converse, and discourse, and perorate, and decide conclusively upon the whole subject.

No: it is much too soon to shut up these things in formulas and

there leave them. These things must be understood before we can allow ourselves such perfunctoriness; and to be understood, they must first be lived. Indeed, is not this haste of ours nowadays, and yet this *glauum* and grasp of ours at comprehensiveness, productive of most intolerable evils? For instance, is it not veritable injustice of Emerson to talk of Hume as if his only title to consideration arose from a lucky thought in regard to causality? Does not such an example as this show the evil of our overhasty formulating? He who believes that even Hume has been yet thoroughly understood, formulated and superseded will make a mistake that will have very detrimental effects on his own development.

These well-informed men, then, who conceive themselves privileged to talk of Kant and Hegel, because they have read the literary twaddle that exists at this present in their regard, would do well to open their eyes to the utter nothingness of such an acquirement in respect to such subjects. In reference to Hegel, Professor Ferrier sums up very tolerably correctly in the words already quoted;<sup>1</sup> 'Who has ever yet uttered one intelligible word about Hegel? Not any of his countrymen, not any foreigner, seldom even himself etc.' Different from the rest, Mr Ferrier, like a man of sense, does not proceed, immediately after having uttered such a *finding* as this, to refute Hegel. When we hear of the worthy old Philister of an Edinburgh professor, who, regularly as the year came round, at a certain part of his course, announced with the grave alacrity of self-belief in sight of one of its strong points, 'I shall now proceed to refute the doctrines of our late ingenious townsman, Mr David Hume', we laugh, and it seems quite natural and reasonable now to all of us that we should laugh. But how infinitely more strongly fortified is the position of the old Edinburgh professor, relatively to Hume, than that of the (so to speak) new Edinburgh professor (Sir William Hamilton – say), relatively to Hegel? Hume's writing is intelligible to the meanest capacity, so to speak; Hegel's, impenetrable to the highest. We know that the old professor could understand the man he opposed – so far, at least, as the words are concerned; we know that the new could *not* understand Hegel, even so far as the words are concerned. We know this, for he admits this; and even asks 'But did Hegel understand himself?'

Here is the secret of Hegel, or rather a schema to a key to it:

Quantity – time and space – empirical realities.

This, of course, requires explanation. We suppose the reader to have mastered Kant through the preceding reproduction of his system.<sup>2</sup> Well, if so, he will have little difficulty in realizing to himself the fact that what we give as a schema to the secret of Hegel is a schema of the whole theoretic system of Kant in its main and substantial position. Quantity stands for the categories in general, though it is here still looked at specially. Quantity, then, is an intellectual thought or *Begriff*; it is wholly abstract; it is wholly logical form. But in time and space, we have only

another form of Quantity; it is the same thought still, though in them in a state of outwardness; the category is inward quantity; the perception is entirely the same thing outwardly. Then empirical realities, so far as they are quantities (what is other than quantity in them has other categories to correspond to it), are but a further *potentiating* of the outwardness of the thought quantity, but a further materialization, so to speak. Here lies the germ of the thought of Hegel that initiated his whole system. The universe is but a materialization, but an externalization, but a heterization of certain thoughts: these may be named, these thoughts *are*, the thoughts of God.

To take it so, God has *made* the world on these thoughts. In them, then, we know the thoughts of God, and, so far, God himself. Probably too, we may suppose Hegel to say, Kant has not discovered *all* the Categories; could I but find others, could I find all of them, I should know then all the thoughts of God that presided at the creation of the universe. But that would just be so far to know God himself, God as he is 'in truth and without veil' (*Hülle*, best translated just 'hull' here), that is in his inward thought, without wrappage (hull or husk) of outward material form, God as he is in his 'eternal essence before the creation of the world and any finite Spirit'.

These categories of Kant are general thoughts. Time and space are, according to Kant himself, but the ground-multiples, and still *a priori*, in which these categories repeat or exemplify themselves; and after the fashion of, first, these ground-unities (the categories) and, second, these *a priori* ground-multiples of the same (time and space), must, third, all created things manifest themselves. Kant conceived these relations subjectively, or from the point of view of *our* thought. Hegel conceives them objectively, or from the point of view of *all* thought. Kant said: we do not know what the things are, or what the things are in themselves (this is what is meant by the thing-in-itself), for they must be received into us through media, and, being so received into us, *they*, so far as we are concerned, cease, so to speak, to be themselves, and *are* only affections of our sense, which become further worked up, but unknown to ourselves, in our intellectual region, into a world *objective*, in that it constitutes *what* we know and perceive, and what we *all* know and perceive, and what, in the intellectual element – being capable there, but not in that of sense, of *comparison* – we can *all agree upon* (the distinctive feature of the only valuable meaning of objective) – but *subjective* (as dependent simply on the peculiar construction of *us*) in its whole origin and fundamental nature.

Hegel, for his part, will not view these principles of pure thought and pure sense as only subjective, as attributes that belong to us, and are only in us, as attributes only human: he considers them, on the contrary, as absolutely universal general principles *on* which, and according to

which, the all or whole is formed and fashioned. The universe is one: and the principles of its structure are thoughts exemplifying themselves in pure *a priori* forms of sense, and, through these again, in empirical objects. These empirical objects, then, are thus but as bodies to thoughts, or, rather, as material schemes and illustrations of intellectual notions. They are thus, then, externalized, materialized or, better, heterized thoughts, i.e. thoughts in *another* form or mode; that is they are but the other of thought. Nay, the pure forms of sense, these pure multiples or manys, named space and time, are, themselves, but thoughts or notions in another form. Time in its succession of parts, and space in such succession of parts, each is but perceptively what the notion quantity is intellectually. They, then, too, are but thoughts in another form, and must rank, so far, with the empirical objects. We have thus, then, now the universe composed only of thought and its other: thought meaning all the notions which we find implied in the structure of the world, all the thoughts, as we may express it otherwise, which were in God's mind when he formed the world, and according to which he formed the world, for God is a Spirit and thinks, and the forms of his thinking must be contained in his work. Nay as God is a Spirit and thinks, his work can only be thought; as God is a Spirit and thinks, the forms of his thinking must be, can only be That which is. In correct parlance, in rigorous accuracy, only God is. It is absurd to suppose the world other than the thought of God. The world, then, is thought, and not matter; and, looked at from the proper side, it will show itself as such. But a judicious use of the schema of Kant enables us to do this.

Quantity – time and space – material forms.

Here is thought simply passing into types, into symbols – that is only into forms or modes of its own self. Properly viewed, then, the world is a system of thought, here abstract and there concrete. To that extent, this view is pantheistic; for the world is seen as the thought of God, and *so* God. But, in the same way, all ordinary views are pantheistic; for to each of them, name itself as it may, the world is the *work* of God, and *so* God: as the *work* of God, it is the product of his thought, the product of himself, and *so* himself. The pantheism of Hegel, then, is only a purer reverence to God than the pantheism of ordinary views, which, instead of hating Hegel, ought to hate only that materialism with which these ordinary views would seek to confound Hegel, but to which he is the polar opposite, to which he nourishes a holier hatred than they themselves.

Here, then, we have arrived at the general conception of the system of Hegel; but this is, by a long way, not enough. Such general conception is the bridge that connects Hegel to the common ground of history, so that he is no longer insulated and unreachable, but can now be passed to in an easy and satisfactory manner. We see now that what he has to say springs from what preceded it; we now know what he is about and

what he aims at; and we can thus follow him with intelligence and satisfaction. But it is necessary to know a Hegel close.

Kant had the idea, then, but he did not see all that it contained, and it was quite useless so long as it remained in the limited form of principles of human thought. But Hegel himself, perhaps, could not have universalized or objectivized these principles of Kant, had he not been assisted by Fichte and Schelling. Kant showed that our world was a system of sensuous affection woven in connection by the understanding, and, principally, by its universal notions, the categories. But Kant conceived these sensuous affections to be produced by the thing-in-itself or things-in-themselves, which, however, we could not know. Fichte now, seeing that these things-in-themselves were absolutely bare, naked and void – mere figments of thought, in fact – conceived that they might safely be omitted as suppositious, as not at all necessary to the *fact*, from which we might just as well begin at once, *without* feigning something quite unknown and idle *as* that beginning. All now, then, was a system of thought, and as yet subjective or human thought. For this seemingly baseless and foundationless new world, a fulcrum was found in the nature of self-consciousness.

Till self-consciousness acts, no one can have the notion 'I' – no one can be an 'I'. In other words, no one knows himself an 'I', feels himself an 'I', names himself an 'I', *is* an 'I', until there be an act of self-consciousness. In the very first act of self-consciousness, then, the 'I' emerges, the 'I' is born; and before that it simply was not. But self-consciousness is just the 'I'; self-consciousness can be set identical with the 'I': the 'I', therefore, as product of self-consciousness, is product of the 'I' itself. The 'I' is self-created, then. 'I' start into existence, come into life, on the very first act of self-consciousness. 'I' then ('I' was not an 'I' before) am the product of my own act, of my own self-consciousness. Of course, I am not to figure my body and concrete personality here, but simply the fact that without self-consciousness nothing can be an 'I' to itself, and with the very first act of self-consciousness 'I' begins. (We may say, too, what *is*, but is not to itself 'I', is as good as is *not* – which, properly considered, is another clue to Hegel.) Here, then, is something self-created, and it is placed as the tortoise under this new world; for it is from this point that Fichte attempts to deduce by means of a series of operations of the thought of this 'I', the whole concretion of the universe. Although Fichte attained to a certain generality by stating his ego to be the universal and not the individual ego, still a certain amphiboly was scarcely to be avoided; and the system remained airy, limited and unsatisfactory.

Fichte had developed the outward world from the ego, as the inferable contradictory of the latter – that is as the non-ego; but Schelling now saw that the non-ego was as essential a member in the whole as the ego;



and he was led thus to place the two side by side, as equal, and, so to speak, parallel. Thus he came to the thought that if from the ego we can go to the non-ego, it will be possible to pass through the same series reverse-wise, or from the non-ego back to the ego. That is if we can develop nature from thought, we may be able also to find thought – the laws and forms of thought – in nature itself. It is evident that thought and nature would be thus but two poles, two complementary poles, the one of ideality, the other of reality. But this conception of two poles necessarily introduced also the notion of a centre in which they would cohere. This middle point would thus be the focus, the supporting centre, from which all would radiate. That is to say, this middle point would be the absolute. But the absolute so conceived is a *neutrum*; it is neither ideal nor real, but is wholly indefinite and indeterminate. No wonder that to Oken, then, it presented itself as, and was named by him, the *Null*. But the general conception of an absolute and neutrum operated with fertility in another direction. Every 'I' is just an 'I', and so we can throw aside the idea of subjectivity, and think of the absolute 'I': but the absolute 'I' is *Reason*. Reason is ascribed to every man as that which constitutes his ego; we can thus conceive reason as *per se*, as independent of this particular subject and that particular subject, and as common to all. We can speak of reason, then, as now not subjective but objective. This new neutrum, this new absolute, it could not now cost much difficulty to identify and set equal with the former neutrum, or absolute, that was the centre of coherence to ideality and reality. But in Schelling's hands, supposing it to have been originally his own, it remained still wholly indefinite, vacuous, idle: it required, in short, the finishing touch of Hegel.

We can conceive now how Hegel was enabled to get beyond the limited subjective form of Kant's mere system of human knowledge, and convert that system into something universal and objective. The thing-in-itself had disappeared, and individuals had disappeared; there remained only an absolute, and this absolute was named reason. But Hegel could see that this absolute was a neutrum, this reason was a neutrum; they were but names, and not one whit better than the thing-in-itself. But were the categories completed, were they co-articulated – were they taken, not subjectively as man's, but objectively as God's, objectively just as thought itself – were this organic and organized whole then substituted for the idle and empty absolute neutrum of Schelling – the thing would be done; what was wanted would be effected; there would result an absolute not idle and void, not unknown and indefinite, but an absolute identified with truth itself, and with truth in the whole system of its details. The neutrum, the reason, the absolute of Schelling could be rescued from indeterminateness, from vacuity, from the nullity of a mere general notion, by setting in its place the categories of Kant (but completed) etc.

as *the thing*, which before had been the *name*, reason. You *speak* of reason, says Hegel to Schelling, but here it actually *is*, here I show you what it is, here I *bring* it.<sup>3</sup>

As yet, however, we still see only the general principle of Hegel, and the connection in which it stands *with*, or the connection in which it arose *from*, the labours of his predecessors. But such a mere general principle is quite unsatisfactory. This, in fact, explains why summaries and the mere literature of the subject are so insufficient: the general principle remains an indefinite word – a name merely – till it gets the core and meaning and life of the *particular*. Probably the very best summary ever yet given of Kant is that of Schwegler, and it is very useful to him who already knows Kant; but good as it is, it is only *literature* (see the vast difference between literary naming and living, struggling, working thought by comparing Schwegler's statement of Kant with Hegel's in the *Encyclopaedia*!) – it only characterizes, it does not reproduce, and it is impossible for anyone to *learn* Kant thence. We must see Hegel's principle closer still, then, if we would thoroughly understand it. We take a fresh departure then:

Quantity – time and space – empirical objects.

I have conceived by this scheme the possibility of presenting the world as a concrete whole so and so constituted, articulated and rounded. But I have not *done* this – I have only conceived it: that is I have not demonstrated my conception; I have not exhibited an actuality to which it corresponds. How to set to work to realize this latter necessity, then? The abstract, universal thoughts which underlie the whole, and on which Kant has struck as categories, are evidently the first thing. I must not content myself with those of Kant; I must satisfy myself as to whether there are not others. In fact, I must discover *all* the categories. But even should I discover all the categories, would that suffice? Would there be anything vital or dynamical in a mere catalogue? Must I not find a principle to connect them the one with the other – a principle in accordance with which the one shall flow from the other? Kant, by the necessity he has proclaimed of an *architectonic principle*, has rendered it henceforth for ever impossible for us to go to work *rhapsodically*, contented with what things come to hand, and as they come to hand. By the same necessity he has demonstrated the insufficiency of his own method of uniting the elements of his matter – the method of ordinary discussion, that is, of what Hegel invariably designates *raisonnement*. This *raisonnement* – suppose we translate it 'reasonment' – is by Kant's own indirect showing no longer applicable where strict science, where rigorous deduction is concerned. Mere reasoning good sense, which simply begins, and ends, and marches as it will, limited by nothing but the necessity of being such as will pass *current* – that is such as begins from the beginning conventionally thought or accepted by the common mind, and passes on

by a like accepted method of ground after ground or reason after reason, which similarly approves itself to the common mind, almost on the test of tasting – is no longer enough. There is conviction now only in rigorous deduction from a rigorously established first. No; after the hints of Kant, mere reasonment or intelligent discussion hither and thither, from argument to argument, ungrounded in its beginning, unsecured by necessity in its progress, will no longer answer. We are now bound to start from a *ground*, a *principium*, an absolutely first and inderivative. It will not do to start from an absolutely formless, mere abstract conception named – by what would be serene philosophical wisdom, but what is really, with all its affectation, with all its airs of infallibility, mere thin superficiality and barren purism – first cause etc.: reason will not stop there. Should we succeed in tracing the series of conditions up to that, we should not remain contented: the curiosity of what we name our reason would stir still, and set us a-wondering and a-wondering as to what could be the cause, what could be the beginning of the first cause itself. Philosophy, in short, is the *universe thought*; and the universe will not be fully thought if the first cause etc. remain unthought.

To complete philosophy, then, we must not only be able to think man, and the world in which he finds himself, but what we name God also. Only so can we arrive at completion; only so can the all of things be once for all thought, and thus at length philosophy perfected. How are we to think a beginning to God, then? It all lies in our scheme: quantity – time and space – empirical objects.

Quantity, standing for the categories in general, though itself but a single and even a subordinate category, is reason, that but repeats itself in its other, time and space, and through these again in empirical objects. Reason, then is the thing of things, the secret and centre of the whole. But reason can be only fully inventoried when we have fully inventoried the categories. But when we have done so, is it reasonable to suppose that they will remain an inventory, a catalogue? Is it not likely that, as in their sum they constitute reason, they will be held together by some mutual bond, and form in themselves, and by themselves, a complete system, an organized unity, with a life and perfection of its own? Nay, even in Kant, even in the meagre discussion of the categories which he supplies, are there not hints that suggest an inward connection between them? Kant himself deduces action, power, substance etc. from causality; and in his discussion of substance and accident, do not similar inward connections manifest themselves? Even in Kant, though he conceives them as merely formal, and as absolutely void till filled by the multiple of, first, perception and then sense, they are seen to be more than formal; they are seen – even in themselves, even abstractly taken – to possess a certain characteristic nature: even thus they seem to manifest the possession of certain properties – the possession, in short, of what Hegel

calls *Inhalt*; a certain contained substance matter, essence; a certain *filling* of manifestible action, a certain *Bestimmung* in the sense not only of vocation and destination, but of possessing within themselves the *principles* which conduct to that end or destiny.

This word *Inhalt* we shall translate 'intent'; and this meaning will be found in the end to accord sufficiently with its common one. *Gehalt*, in like manner, will be translated 'content'; and we, in starting with 'intent' and 'content' in England, are not one whit worse off than Hegel himself was in starting with *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* in Germany. Use will make plain. The categories, then, even abstractly and apart from sense, may be supposed to possess a certain natural *intent*, a certain natural filling, and so a certain natural life and movement of their own.

Let me, then, we may suppose Hegel to continue, but find the complete catalogue of the categories, and with that the secret principle on which they will rank, range and develop themselves; let me effect this, and then I shall have perfectly a pure concrete reason, *pure* because *abstract*, in the sense that abstraction is made from all things of sense, and that we are alone here with what is intellectual only, but *concrete*, in the sense that we have here a mutually co-articulated, a completed, an organic, a living whole – reason as it is in its own pure self, without a particle of matter, and so, to that extent and considering the source of that reason, God as he is without hull, before the creation of the world or a single finite intelligence. Nay, why demand more? Why crave a *Jenseits*, a beyond, to what we have? Why should not that be the all? Why should we not, realizing all that we anticipate by the method suggested – why should we not realize to ourselves the whole universe in its absolute oneness and completeness, and with the whole wealth of its inner mutual interdependent and co-articulated elements? Why not conceive an absolute now and here – eternity – the Idea, the concrete Idea – that which is – the absolute, the all? We see the universe – we find the eternal principles of thought on which it rests which constitute it; why, then, go further? Why feign more – a *Jenseits*, an unknown, that is simply a *Jenseits* and an unknown, an unreachable, an unexistent? No; let us but *think* the universe truly, and we shall have truly entered into possession of the universal life, and of a world that needs no Indian tortoise for its pedestal and support. Pantheism! you call out. Well, let it be pantheism, if it be pantheism to show and demonstrate that God is all in all – that in him we live, move and have our being – that he is substance and that he is form, that he is the absolute and the infinite!

But conditioned cannot understand the unconditioned, you say; the contingent cannot understand the absolute, and finite cannot understand the infinite; and in proof thereof you open certain boys' puzzle-boxes of time and space, and impale me on the horns of certain infantile dilemmas. Well, these wonderful difficulties you will come to blush at yourselves,

when you shall have seen for yourselves, and shall have simply endeavoured to see what I, Hegel, have given you to see.

But what difficulty is there in the infinite? Let us go to fact, and not trouble ourselves with fictions and chimeras. Let us have things, and not logical forms (using this last phrase simply as it is now generally understood), and that is the business of philosophy, and this it is that you simply fail to see in my case; that I give you things, namely, and not words; that I conduct you face to face with the world as it is, and ask you to look into it: let us have things, then, and where is the difficulty of the infinite? Is not the infinite that which is? Is there any other infinite than that which is? Has not that which is been from all eternity, and will it not be to all eternity? Is not the infinite, then, that which is? And what are we sent here for? Are we sent here simply to dig coals and drink wine, and get, each of us, the most we can for our own individual vanity and pride, and then rot? What, after all, is the business of man here? To advance in civilization, you say. Well, is civilization digging coals and drinking wine etc.; or is civilization thought and the process of thought? Is there anything of any real value in the end but thinking? Even in good *feelings*, what is the core and central life? Is it not the good thought that is in them? There is no feeling worthy of the name (tickling the soles of the feet, for example, is not worthy of the name) but is as dew around an idea; and it is this idea which glances through it and gives it its whole reality and life. We are sent here to think, then – that is admitted. But *what* are we sent to think? Why, what but that which is – and this is infinite! Our business here, then, even to use your own language, is to think the infinite. And where is the difficulty, if the instrument with which you approach the infinite – thought – be itself infinite? Is it not thought to thought? Why should not thought be able to put its finger on the pulse of the infinite, and tell its rhythmus and its movement and its life, as it is, and ever has been, and ever will be?

And the absolute! It is impossible to reach the absolute! What, then, is the absolute? Bring back your eyes from those puzzle-boxes of yours (space and time), which should be no puzzle-boxes if, as you say you do, you understand and accept the teaching of Kant in their very respect; bring back your eyes from those puzzle-boxes – bring them back from looking so hopelessly vacuously into – it is nothing else – your own navel – and just see what is the absolute! What does thought in any one case whatever of its exercise, seek but the absolute? Thought, even in common life, when it asks why the last beer is sour, the new bread bitter or its best clothes faded, seeks the absolute. Thought, when it asked why an apple fell, sought the absolute and found it, at least so far as outer matter is concerned. Thought, when, in Socrates, it interrogated the particular for the general, many particular valours for the one universal valour, many particular virtues for the one universal virtue, sought the absolute,

and founded that principle of express generalization and conscious induction which you yourself thankfully accept, though you ascribe it to another. Thought in Hume, when it asked the secret foundation of the reason of our ascription of effects to causes, sought the absolute; and if he did not find it, he put others, of whom I Hegel am the last, on the way to find it. What since the beginning of time, what in any corner of the earth, has philosophy, has thinking ever considered, but the absolute? When Thales said *water*, it was the absolute he meant. The absolute is the *fire* of Anaximenes. The *numbers* of Pythagoras, the *one* of Parmenides, the *flux* of Heraclitus, the *voûs* of Anaxagoras, the *substance* of Spinoza, the *matter* of Condillac – what are all these but names that would designate and denote the absolute? What does science seek in all her inquiries? Is it not explanation? Is not explanation the assigning of reasons? Are not these reasons in the form of principles? Is not each principle to all the particulars it subsumes the absolute? And when will explanation be complete, when will all reasons be assigned? When – but when we have seen the ultimate principle? And the ultimate principle, whether in the parts or in the whole, may surely be named the absolute. To tell us we cannot reach the absolute is to tell us not to think; and we *must* think, for we are sent to think. To live is to think; and to think is to seek an ultimate principle, and that is the absolute. Nor have we anything to think but *that which is*, which is the infinite. Merely to live, then, is to think the infinite, and to think the infinite is to seek the absolute; for to live is to think. *Your* absolute and *your* infinite may be, and I doubt not *are*, quite incomprehensible, for they are the chimeras of your own self-will; whereas I confine myself to the realms of fact and the will of God. So on such points one might conceive Hegel to speak.

Reason, then, and the things of sense, constitute the universe. But the things of sense are but types, symbols, metaphors of reason – are but reason in another form, are but the other of reason. We have the same thing twice: here, inward or intellectual; and there, outward or sensuous. By inward and intellectual, however, it is not necessary to mean what pertains to the human subject: the inward and intellectual to which we allude is an inward and intellectual belonging not specially to human beings as such, but an inward and intellectual in the form of universal principles of reason, which constitute the diamond net into the invisible meshes of which the material universe concretes itself. Reason, then, is evidently the principle of the whole, the absolute, for it is itself and the other. This, then, is the general form of the universal principle – of the pulse that stirs the all of things. That, which being itself and its other, reassumes this other into its own unity. This, the general principle, will also be the particular, and will be found to apply to all and every subsidiary part and detail.

Nay, what is this, after all, but another name for the method of Fichte

– that method by which he sought to deduce the all of things from the inherent nature of the universal ego? His method is thesis, antithesis, synthesis; or, in Hegel's phraseology – (1), reason; (2), its other; (3), reason and its other. Now this, though summing up the whole, has a principle of movement in it, when applied, by which all particulars are carried up ever towards the general unity and completeness of the whole.

If we are right in this idea, and if we but find all the categories, we shall find these flowing out of each other on this principle in such wise that we have only to look on in order to see the genesis of organic reason as a self-supported, self-maintained, self-moved life, which is the all of things, the ultimate principle, the absolute. Supposing, then, the whole of reason thus to co-articulate and form itself, but independently of sense, and to that extent abstractly, though in itself an intellectual concrete, it will not be difficult to see that it is only in obedience to the inherent nature, the inherent law, that, raised into entire completion in this abstract form, it now of necessity passes as a whole into its other, which is nature. For nature, as a whole, is but the other of reason as a whole, and so always they must mutually correlate themselves. It is mere misconstruction and misapprehension to ask *how* the one passes into the other – to ask for the transition of the one into the other. What we have before us here is not a mundane succession of cause and effect (such mundane successions have elsewhere their demonstrated position and connection), but it is the absolute, that which is, and just so do we find that which is, constituted. That which is, is at once reason and nature, but so that the latter is but the other of the former.

If, then, we have correlated and co-articulated into a whole the subordinate members or moments of reason, it is evident that the completed system of reason, now as a whole, as a one, will just similarly comport itself to its other, which is nature. In like manner, too, as we found reason *per se* to constitute a system, an organized whole of co-articulated notions, so we shall find nature also to be a correspondent whole – correspondent, that is, to reason as a whole, and correspondent in its constitutive parts or moments to the constitutive parts or moments of reason. The system of nature, too, being completed, it is only in obedience to the general scheme that reason will resume nature into its own self, and will manifest itself as the unity, which is Spirit, and which is thus at length the final form and the final appellation of the absolute: the absolute is Spirit. And Spirit, too, similarly looked at and watched, will be found similarly to construct and constitute itself, till at last we shall reach the notion of the notion, and be able to realize, in whole and in part, the Idea, that which is, the absolute.<sup>4</sup> And, on this height, it will be found that it is with perfect intelligence we speak of reason, of the Idea, thus:

The single thought which philosophy brings with it to the study of history is simply that of reason: that it is reason that rules the world; that, in the history of the world, it is reason which events obey. This thought, with respect to history, is a presupposition but not with respect to philosophy. There by speculative science is it proved that reason – and this term shall suffice us on this occasion without any nearer discussion of the reference and relation involved to God – that reason is the substance as well as the infinite power, the infinite matter as well as the infinite form, of all natural and spiritual life. The substance is it, that, namely, whereby and wherein all actuality has being and support. The infinite power is it, in that it is not so impotent as to be adequate to an ideal only, to something that only *is* to be and *ought* to be – not so impotent as to exist only on the outside of reality, who knows where, as something special and peculiar in the heads of certain men. The infinite matter is it, entire essentiality and truth, the stuff, the material, which it gives to its own activity to work up; for it requires not, like functions of the finite, the conditions of external and material means whence it may supply itself with aliment and objects of activity. So to speak, as its own self it feeds, and it is itself and for itself the material which itself works up. It is its own presupposition and its own absolute end, and for itself it realizes this end out of the inner essence into the outer form of the natural and spiritual universe. That this Idea is the true, the eternal, the absolutely capable, that it reveals itself in the world, and that nothing reveals itself there but it, its honour and glory; this, as has been said, is what is proved in philosophy, and is here assumed.<sup>5</sup>

Such, then, we believe to be the secret origin and constitution of the system of Hegel. We do not say, and Hegel does not say, that it is complete, and that no joining gapes. On the contrary, in the execution of the details, there will be much that will give pause. Still in this execution – we may say as much as this on our own account – all the great interests of mankind have been kindled into new lights by the touch of this master-hand; and surely the general idea is one of the hugest that ever curdled in the thought of man. Hegel, indeed, so far as abstract thought is concerned, and so far as one can see at this moment, seems to have closed an era, and has named the all of things in such terms of thought as will, perhaps, remain essentially the same for the next thousand years. To all present outward appearance, at least, what Aristotle was to ancient Greece, Hegel is to modern Europe.

We must see the obligations of Hegel to his predecessors, however, and among these, whatever may be due to Fichte and Schelling, Kant must be named the quarry. Still it is to be remarked that Hegel did not content himself with these, but that he subjected the whole wisdom of



the ancients, and the whole history of philosophy, to a most thorough and searching inquest. And not that only: Hegel must not be conceived as a worker among books alone; the actual universe as it is in history and present life was the real object of his study, and, as it manifested itself, his system had also to adapt itself; and never, perhaps, was the all of things submitted to a more restless understanding.

Still the secret of Kant is the secret of Hegel also: it is the notion and only the notion which realizes, that is, which transmutes into meaning and perception, the particulars of sense. That the ego together with the method of Fichte, and the neutrum together with the correlated ideal and the real of Schelling, also contributed much no one can doubt. We can see, too, the corroborative decision he derived from his profound and laborious analysis of the ancients, and indeed of the whole history of philosophy. Still there remains to Hegel in himself such penetration of insight, such forceful and compellative power as stamps him – as yet – the respective master of thought.

## Notes

1 See Preface, [not reprinted in this volume, R.S.].

2 The allusion is to a MS. The reader will necessarily be disappointed with this same schema to a key to the secret; he will necessarily find it very meagre, very abstract. He will think better of it by and by, however, it is hoped; as it is also hoped that after the full discussion of the subject as in relation to Kant, it will appear anything but meagre, and anything but abstract. (I may add now that the *Text-Book to Kant* represents the mentioned MS. New.)

3 This is still supposed to be true, though, of course, both Fichte and Schelling had each his own statement of the categories. (New)

4 'From the *logical* Idea the *concrete* Idea is distinguished as Spirit, and the *absolutely concrete* Idea as the absolute Spirit' (Hegel, WW xvii, 172). (New)

5 Hegel, *Phil. of Hist.*, 3rd edition, pp. 12, 13.

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## Extract from *The General Principles of the Philosophy of Nature* (1848)

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Johann B. Stallo

### Hegel

Nature had now been recognized, by Schelling and his followers, in history, and history in nature; the eternal mind, the innermost spiritual being of man, in the material world, and the activities of the material world in the mind. If Locke had annihilated the mind, in beholding there nothing but the shadowy projections of external realities upon a primitive blank, and, as if to avenge it, Fichte had again made these external forms mere evanescent projections from the depths of his mind, it was now understood that the mind only expanded itself, evolved its faculties, in concentrating outward existences, that its exterioration was simultaneously an introversion, a descent into the depths of its being. This then led to the expiration of absolute idealism, with its independent, innate spiritualities, on the one hand, and of absolute materialism, with its gross actualities, on the other. For the energies of the mind are called into existence by material objectivity, and the external world attains to its true reality in the intelligence of the mind. The world exists not in its truth, unless it be thought by its organized intelligence, man, who is, as it were, the eye with which it surveys itself.

This higher unity of mind and nature was the grand *apperçu* of the Schellingian philosophy, but it was from its nature intuitive, and its only authentication depended upon the genial intelligence of the philosopher and the poet.<sup>1</sup> The question arose, what is it that prompts the incessant evolution of the eternal, the deity, the absolute? Why is the spiritual a history, and nature a generation? Why is the infinite intensity of *mind* brought to light in the infinite extension of *matter*? What forces the idea to become a form, the 'word to turn flesh', and the form again to resolve itself into an idea? The answer to this question is the philosophy of Hegel. Hegel demonstrated that the great motive principle in the absolute

is its inherent self-opposition. The absolute, in which all things live is not, as with Schelling, the abstract identity of two spheres; it is the eternal *spirit, thinking itself* in nature and history. Its being is *a process*; but, since it is the absolute substance, a process which has itself both for its material and for its object or result. In dualizing itself, it yet remains in its eternal identity. Figuratively speaking, the fundamental ether of the deity is *not repose, but activity* – moreover, activity *within* itself, which must therefore distinguish itself as the acting subject and the passive object – and, finally, activity *for itself*, which produces, evolves, but the intensity of its own inner nature. *Activity in and for itself is thought*. The unit discedes, enters into self-opposition, but only for the purpose of self-recognition – in order, therefore, to re-establish its unity, not *after*, but *in*, the discession. If we reflect upon the expression, ‘a living unit’, we shall perhaps be less disposed to smile at the idea of a unity *in* the opposition, a unity that requires and *contains* the antithesis.

Nature is thus a product of thought, and in this all the objections of the philosophy of Kant are met at once. Hegel made it evident that the difficulty in the results of the Kantian *Critique*, the inevitable opposition between the objective reality and the subjective idea, depended upon a misconception rooting in the old philosophical dualism. The reality, the truth of things, is, in the admission of everyone, that which bodies itself forth in the series of phenomenal variations; and Hegel proved that this ‘constant’ is the result of the dialectic process of thought. The uncertainty of our agnition of external objects obviously arose from the assumption that those objects had a real existence independently of thought; that they might *be* different from what they were *thought*. The proof, then, *that their being lay in thought*, which is given in the *Phenomenology of the Mind*, bridged over the chasm.

I foresee that the stubborn rigour of the dialectical procedure, to which I must needs adhere in following Hegel through the series of his logical reductions and deductions, will weary my readers. We shall have to reason our way up, sometimes perhaps tediously, from the individual to the general, in the retrogressive individualization of which we shall again experience (if we may be pardoned the expression) all the toil of creation. The philosophical poet enchants us by revealing the mysteries of existence in adducing a number of phenomenal analogies all pointing to the same centre; he conjures up the spirit of nature from groups, where it would not be seen in individuals; he converts things into images, and, in all cases, causes the idea to flash upon us, so as, for a moment, to illumine our innermost being, where we see that idea written in its full identity, and thus gain an instinctive certainty of truth. Such comprehensive ideas, the offspring of genial perception, of which we at once behold the verification in and around ourselves – which with a single breath infuse life into a thousand individual forms, and link the most distant phenomena

and occurrences – which at a word summon before us the past and conjure up the future – are endowed with a charm which does not adorn the path of toilsome reasoning. It may be pardonable, on this account, to give a prospective glimpse of the goal, in advance of our serious investigation, which will bring us thither – to state what are the leading ideas in the philosophy of Hegel, in contradistinction, first, to those views which pervade our ordinary reasonings, and second, to the philosophical principles of some of his noted predecessors, with whom he has been often compared, and not infrequently confounded.

First, then, as to the peculiarities of Hegel's philosophy, such as they appear when contrasted with views prevalent in our days, it is shown by Hegel that existing things are not quiescent, permanent in their existence, and cannot be anywise comprehended as such in their nature, but that they are essentially *living processes*. Very vaguely speaking, this might be thus expressed: things are not, even for an instant, *stationary*; they are *fluxional*, and subject to incessant change. Their apparent quietude is but the quietude of commotion. This is, indeed, nothing new; Heraclitus had already said: Πάντα ῥεῖ, and it seems a very trivial, 'everyday' enunciation; we all know that finite things are coexisting with other finite things, subject, therefore, to their modifying influence, and, consequently, to change. But Hegel further shows that this change is not merely an accident superinduced from without, but that it is prompted by the very nature, the 'definition', of the thing within; that finite things are, from an *inherent* necessity, not only coexistent with other things, but driven to *self-negation*. Why we do not use the word 'self-annihilation' will hereafter appear.

Pursuing this idea farther, let us see to what it leads. Change is a transition from one thing to another; for, when a thing has changed its state, it is really a different thing. The changing thing, inasmuch as the change is urged by its own nature, must, in consequence, at once *contain* and *exclude* the thing into which it changes; it implies a contradiction, by reason of its indwelling activity. In general, all activity, all life, is the unity of a contradiction. Let the reader who finds difficulty in 'realizing' (to use an Americanism) this apparent paradox reflect upon an *act*. In the act, that which originates thereby (and something always originates in an act, or something is after the act, which was not before it) *is* and *is not*.

In the same manner, the deity is not, as usually taken, absolute, eternal rest. Ordinarily, though life, thought, activity etc., are predicated of the deity, they are appended thereto rather than deduced from it, which latter, even if attempted, would in fact prove impossible. 'The eternal, infinite cause of all things is the deity' is the general enunciation; 'all other things are but effects of this cause'. A *formal* connection between cause and effect is thus, indeed, established; but how the one necessarily

belongs to the other remains incomprehensible. Hegel showed (or, if this be not granted, at least *endeavoured* to show) that the absolute is to be conceived as distinguishing, 'stating' (positing) itself as cause *and* effect, preserving, however, in this distinction its unity. The absolute is, then, its own cause; it distinguishes itself as effect, but in the latter sees only its own identity, is therefore reflected into itself, and the unity *resulting* from this self-reflection is the true unity of the absolute – not the mere *simple* unity without process and discession. Let the reader look at this under any aspect he chooses; let him say, for example, God thinks himself – God is essentially active – God is a *spirit* etc.; the only thing indispensable here is to conceive the idea of a *living unit* – a unit indeed, since it is without any external relations, since it relates only to itself – a living process of self-distinction. Here lies the sense of so many propositions of Hegel, which have been decried as blasphemous, or ridiculed as nonsensical; as, for instance: the absolute, the deity, is a reconciled contradiction; the deity is to be apprehended not only as a rigid, inactive *substance*, but likewise as an internally active, thinking, self-distinguishing subject; the deity is self-origination, a circle, which *presupposes* the result as its own object and end – proceeds from and returns to itself. Truth, it is said elsewhere by Hegel, is the *Whole* – but the whole is only being which completes itself in its own development. The absolute is essentially a result; not till the end of its process is it *itself*; in its nature it is *subject* – self-exteriation, self-evolution. The deity is only through *mediation*, which mediation is the moving self-equality, self-reflection, or, taking it abstractly, simple origination, the abstract *fieri*. The pure self-agnition in its absolute exteriation, this ether as such, is the foundation of all science.

In the current philosophical systems, a quiescent substance, absolute quantity, is the material from which all qualitative differences are elaborated; in Hegel's philosophy, absolute difference, absolute quality, forms the beginning, from which quantity proceeds. Hegel does not attempt to evolve concrete forms from an abstraction; his 'absolute' is essentially concrete. The reason for so many anomalies (as they are termed) in the philosophy of Hegel will now be apparent. Since truth is apprehended, not as something reposing in the bosom of its own being, but as the 'Whole in its development', as the absolute, not abstractly taken, but also in its phenomenal existence, in its individual exteriation, the system of metaphysics, which formerly consisted of nothing but formalities, must encroach upon the domain of all science. Instead of an establishment of certain forms, merely for construing the various material, form and material now stand in necessary relation; the material – nature etc. – enter as essentially into metaphysical reasoning as the old formulas. It cannot, therefore, be startling to see that the natural sciences, history etc., are an integral part of metaphysics. 'The true form in which truth

exists', says Hegel, 'is its scientific system alone.' Formerly, all the realities of life were excluded from philosophical speculation; they were beneath the level of thought; in the *Logic* etc. of Hegel, the idealities are exhibited as producing themselves in and through these realities.

It will be borne in mind that, in the philosophy of Kant, an *original* duality of principles was presumed – the principle of *mind*, of *intelligence*, on the one hand, and that of the *material*, on the other. The former only was hitherto (I speak, of course, of the systems whose influence is now felt, and which yet give to our textbooks of logic etc. their tone) the subject of logic and metaphysics; and we have seen how fatal this proved to philosophical certainty. With Hegel, on the contrary, the absolute intelligence or mind, the absolute, is in itself both the *infinite substance* (material) of all natural and spiritual life and the *infinite form*, the active exteriorisation of this substance. It is not a bare formality, which would feign subject matter, but, on account of its impotence, remains a mere ideal; it is at once an unlimited form, a ceaseless activity, and the material upon which it operates.

## Hegel's Phenomenology of the Mind

### *Consciousness*

#### The certainty of the senses

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel begins by showing that truth does not lie in the immediate data furnished by perception, but that universally the truth of any object involves mediation. An object is before me, and for the certainty of this I have the vouching of the senses. Now this immediate certainty arises not from the circumstance that my consciousness has unfolded itself in the perception, and that my thoughts have been set into flow, nor from the multiplicity of relations in the object itself, and of the object to other objects; I simply possess the assurance; the object *is*. I, *this* particular consciousness, become sensible of *this* individual object.

This perception, then, presents the difference between the conscious 'I' and the present object. Neither of them is absolutely immediate; I have the certainty of myself in and through the object, and the object is certain for and through the 'I'. Yet the truth seems to rest with the object, as to its existence, it appears to be a matter of indifference whether or not it be known by the 'I'. It remains therefore to be seen whether the 'being' of that object is really such as the perception of sense exhibits it. What is the 'this' before me? It is the 'now' and the 'here'; upon those two data my certainty of it depends.<sup>2</sup> Is this 'now' any thing directly given? The 'now' is night, for instance; but the truth of this

vanishes – if I write it down, it no longer holds good, as every truth should, for truth is permanent. I find, in looking at it again, that the ‘now’ is morning. Nevertheless it is still ‘now’; it is neither night nor morning, and still it is nothing without them; it is therefore at once night, morning etc. It is the particular ‘this’ of perception, and likewise not ‘this’. The truth arising from this negation of the particular, which particular is, in spite of its necessary negation, indispensable for its existence, is the universal ‘now’. Similarly, the ‘here’ of the senses is, for example, a tree. I simply turn around, and the ‘here’ is now, according to the same senses, a house. The simple ‘here’, which remains, is evidently the result of mediation. Mere abstract, general *being*, but being depending upon negation and mediation, therefore remains as the foundation for the certainty of the senses; and the truth beyond this generality of being attaches itself only to *my* opinion, to *my* knowing of the object. The relation between the object and my knowledge of it has now been inverted. The object, which was originally asserted to be the only thing essential to the certainty, has at present resolved itself into a bare generality; its truth as *this* object now lies in my knowing of it. I behold, hear etc. this object; the ‘now’ is day, because I see it; the ‘here’ is a tree for the same reason. ‘I, this particular “I”, assert the tree to be the “here”’; another “I”, however, sees the house, and asserts *that* to be the “here”. Both are attested by the same immediateness of sight, and yet the one vanishes in the other.’<sup>3</sup> The only thing which does not vanish is the generality of the ‘I’, whose seeing is a sight neither of the house, nor of the tree, but simply seeing, which, notwithstanding all this, again depends upon the mediating negation of *this* house etc. – in short, of the particular. The seeing ‘I’ is therefore as general as the ‘now’, ‘here’ or ‘this’, and it is as impossible to say what is meant by the ‘I’ as what is understood by ‘here’ and ‘this’. We are thus forced to place the nature of the certainty of the senses neither in the object nor in the ‘I’, but in the totality of the two, such as it is immediately given. It is to be seen, then, what is immediately given.

The ‘now’ is pointed out; this ‘now’. In being pointed out it has already ceased to be; the actual ‘now’ is no longer that pointed out – it *has been*. Its truth therefore is that it *has been*; but what *has been* is *not*. The immediate presentation of an object is essentially a *movement*. First the ‘now’ is pointed out and asserted as the truth; but next it is pointed out only as *having been* – the first truth, its *being*, is revoked; third, what *has been* is *not* – the revocation is revoked, the negation denied, and I return to the original truth as general: the ‘now’ is. This movement exhibits the truth of the ‘now’, namely, a ‘now’ reflected into itself, a *general* ‘now’, a multiplicity of ‘nows’ comprised in a unity.

In an analogous manner the ‘here’ pointed out is first and ‘above’; but next it is not an ‘above’, but a ‘below’, and so on. The one ‘here’ vanishes

in the other; what remains is nothing more than a negative 'here', a simple complex of many 'heres'.

*The dialectics of the certainty of sense thus consist simply in the history of its own movement, in its own experience, and are nothing forcibly superadded; nay, the certainty of the senses is nothing but this movement.*

### Observation

There is consequently no truth in the so-called individualities of sense; the truth is the universal, which is not *perceived* (by the senses), but *observed* (*wahrgenommen*). Universality (generality) is the principle of observation; its immediate constituents, the 'I' and the object, are both general. Simultaneously with the principle of generality these constituents have originated; the subjective observation is simply the movement in which the object is exhibited, and the object the same movement as a *unity*. The object is essentially the same as the subjective movement; the latter the development and separation of the items, the former their unital comprehension. For us, then, *generality as a principle* is the essence of observation; the subject observing and the object observed are not essential. But each of these separately is a generality; since they are opposed to each other, we are forced again to inquire to which of the two the essentiality belongs. Now the subjective movement of observation, being inconstant, is unessential, and the essence must lie in the comprehensive unity, in the object. The principle of this object, generality, is a *mediated*, not an *immediate* unity; it is simple only from the comprehensiveness of the movement of which it is the result. This, then, must appear as a feature in its nature; the object is one of many qualities. But quality is determination; determination depends upon negation; the 'this' is consequently stated at the same time as 'not this'.

The different qualities are independent of each other, and only meet, interpenetrate without interference, in the simple generality of the object, in the 'here' and 'now' – the abstract medium of the many qualities. But these qualities themselves are simple generalities; this salt, for example, is a simple 'here', but it is at the same time white, *and* acrid, *and* cubical, *and* of definite specific gravity etc. These different qualities interpenetrate in the simple 'here' without affecting each other. They are, however, *definite* qualities; they refer, therefore, not to themselves alone, but also to other qualities opposed to them. This negation of the opposite qualities does not take place in the simple medium, in the mere 'and'; this medium is, consequently, likewise exclusive in its nature; it is a *unit*.

The object as the truth of observation, when complete, is therefore (a) indifferent, passive generality, the 'and' of the many qualities, or, rather, materials; (b) the simple negation, the exclusion of other qualities; and (c) the many qualities themselves, and the two preceding momenta referred to each other: the negation relating to the indifferent medium.



In so far as the differences belong to the indifferent medium, they are general, relate to themselves alone, and do not affect each other; but in so far as they belong to the negative unit, they are exclusive. The generality of observation becomes a *quality* only by developing out of itself, distinguishing and uniting, *exclusive unity* and *pure generality*.

By this object, then, as it now stands, consciousness is determined as an observing subject. It is sensible of the possibility of an illusion: for, though it immediately faces the 'without', this is annulled as immediate, since generality has become the principle. The criterion for the truth of the object, then, is self-equality. We are therefore to inquire what is the experience of consciousness in its observation.

The observed object presents itself as absolutely *one, individual*; but it is observed also as a *quality*, which is general, and thus goes beyond individuality. My first observation, in which I took the object as individual, was therefore incorrect; the generality of the quality forces me to take the object likewise as a generality. Again: the quality is *definite* – opposed to another quality and excluding it. I am consequently again compelled to abandon the generality, and to state the object as an exclusive *one*. There being, however, many qualities in the exclusive unity which do not mutually affect each other, the object is to be apprehended as a general medium, in which different qualities separately exist as generalities of sense, and yet as exclusive, since they are definite. The simple object is therefore observed as an individual quality, which again is *not* a quality, since it does not belong to an individual unity, nor definite, since it does not refer to other qualities. It is therefore the mere *being of sense*, and we have thus returned to the point whence we started. Consciousness in its observation of truth is reflected into itself, just as before in the certainty of sense; with this difference, however, that in the latter instance it appeared to contain the truth of the object, whereas now it contains the untruth. Of this, however, it is aware, and in this manner the object is maintained in its purity. The object is first observed as a unit; then it ceases to be such, and presents the difference of qualities only to *my consciousness*. 'This object is indeed white to *my* eye, acid to *my* tongue, cubic to *my* touch; I am therefore the general medium in which this separation of qualities takes place.'

But the object, though a unit, is a determinate one, and determination depends upon contrast, upon exclusion. Thereby the qualities *as different* again become attributes *of the object*; the object is white, *and* acid, *and* cubical etc. – the simultaneous and independent existence of the different qualities. Their compenetration occurs in my consciousness. This gives me again a reversal of the relation; formerly consciousness attributed to itself the *multiplicity* of qualities in the object; now it makes itself responsible for their *unity*. The result of its experience then, is that the duplicity is inherent in the object. The object by itself is a unity, equal to itself;

but it is likewise for others, depending upon a difference from them. *Immediately* the objects do not differ from themselves, but simply from each other: this relation, however, is mutual, and each object is necessarily affected with the difference. Properly, then, it contains a twofold difference: first, the difference of its various qualities (the salt, for example, being white inasmuch as it is not cubical, and *vice versa* etc.), and second, the difference from its counter-object. Nevertheless, the latter only of these differences is essential to the object, conferring upon it a distinct individuality. But this latter difference is a relation to other objects; in virtue of this, the independent existence of the object is annulled; *as determined*, the individual object is nothing more than the relation to other objects. The very relation, then, which was said to be essential to the existence of the object proves to be *the negation* of its self-existence; the object perishes through its essential quality.

#### Force and understanding – phenomenal and supersensual world

We thus become the sport of a series of contradictions: of an individuality, which is at the same time a generality – of an essence, which is unessential – of an unessentiality, which is yet necessary; and we see that these contradictions are incident to the object. Our consciousness is in this manner forced to abandon its particular ideas, and to take the object as the unconditionally general, since that alone is lasting, invariable; having been informed, moreover, that *being for itself* and *being for other objects* are identical. This absolute generality, moreover, precludes the difference between form and substance; for, were the substance something distinct from the form, it must be a *particular mode* of being for itself and being for other objects; but being for itself and being for other objects *abstractly* constitute the true nature of the object, the unconditionally general. Yet, in considering the object as one of our consciousness, or in its existence independent of our consciousness, we distinguish between form and substance. In the latter view we behold the object, first, as the general medium of several independent qualities, and, again, as a unit reflected into itself, in which that independence is annihilated. In the one case, the object is taken in its being for other objects, in its passivity, where self-existence is destroyed; in the other case, it is assumed in its being for itself. As to the former, each of the independent qualities is a medium; the generality of the object is essentially a multiplicity of generalities. These generalities, however, compenetrates, and thereby again annul their separation, thus returning to the unital medium. This movement, by which the unity effuses itself into multiplicity, and the multiplicity resumes itself in unity, is called *force*, which appears as twofold; first in its exteriorisation, as the independent qualities in their being, and again as reintroversion, or as *force* properly so termed.

Some readers will find this transition to force odd and perchance unin-

telligible. Hegel has shown that the intimate nature of the object is unity and multiplicity. If I take the object as one, this very unity *forces* itself into multiplicity, and conversely.

The understanding only makes this distinction and induces the duplicity, which does not subsist in the absolute being; exterioration and self-introversion are utterly inseparable. For the understanding, this duality of the force is not only necessary, but even substantial; it is, on the one hand, the mere introverted unital intensity, *being for itself*, and, on the other, the unfolded multiplicity of the different qualities; both of them, however, in necessary mutual transition. The unity of the force excludes the existence of the multiple qualities; yet it is the nature of that unity to be these qualities; it therefore unfolds itself into them, gives itself form. It seems, then, as if the form had been solicited from without; but this 'without' is the object's own exterioration, the form itself, and the object now exists as the medium of the unfolded qualities. Still its nature is equally unital, and therefore the non-existence of the different qualities; this unity in its turn becomes the 'without' of its present existence, soliciting it to self-introversion.

We have now an insight into this virtual duplication of the force; we have two forces, whose existence, however, is such a movement that the being of each is a mere statement, a mere position in and by means of its counterpart. The one exists only by dint of its transition into the other; the two are not independent extremes connected by an intervening medium, but they exist solely in and through this medium.

'Through the medium of this play of the forces, then, we look into the background of things.'<sup>4</sup> This medium, the being and simultaneous evanescence of the force, which co-includes the two extremes of its inner unity, and the outer multiplicity of the understanding, is the *phenomenon*. Our object has thus become a syllogistic trinity, whose extremes, the inner unital nature of things, on the one hand, and the multiplicity of the understanding, on the other, coalesce in their phenomenal medium. We look into the interior of things only through the phenomenon; the interior itself is transcendental, a 'beyond', for our consciousness. This transcendental interior, however, reveals nothing whatever to consciousness; any more, to use Hegel's own simile, than *pure* darkness or *pure* light reveals anything to the gaze. But the supersensual 'beyond' results from mediation; it proceeds from the phenomenon, and the phenomenon is its reality. The supersensual is but the sensual<sup>5</sup> taken in its truth, taken as a phenomenon, and not as a permanent reality, which it has amply proved itself not to be. We behold the play of the forces, a continual shifting of determinate appearances, whose truth consists merely in the *law* which manifests itself there. The law is the permanent image of the fleeting phenomenon. The supersensual world is a quiet realm of laws, indeed beyond the world of observation, since this exhibits the law only

in continuous change; but it is nevertheless *present* in the world of observation, and its immediate type.

Yet the law thus present in the phenomenon realizes itself differently under different circumstances; it is a *determinate* law. This leads at once again to a multiplicity of laws, which multiplicity in turn contradicts our consciousness of a unital interior. The various laws must consequently reduce to *one* law, in which the determination is simply omitted, without an actual identification of the individual, determinate laws. These in their determination are then phenomenal, and the determination disappears in the reduction. But even in this general law we meet with a duplicity, since in it the internal difference (between its intense, introverted unity and the exterior, unfolded multiplicity) is immediately apprehended, whereby the two momenta are at once stated as absolutely subsisting. Now according to the above, these differences must return into the simple unity of the interior; and thus we have the law, first, as the expression of the subsisting integrants or momenta, and next, as their return into unity, which may again be termed *force*. To use the instance adduced by Hegel: electricity as simple force; as dually existing, as positive and negative, it is law. In the capacity of a simple principle, electricity is indifferent as to its duality; yet when it exteriorates, manifests itself, it is necessarily as positive and negative. The force, as such, then, is indifferent to its dissection in the law, in its exterioration. Moreover, the integrants in that exterioration are indifferent with respect to each other. For example, motion, as a law, divides itself into time and space, into distance and velocity. But time and space, distance and velocity, in themselves, do not express their origin in this motion; they are conceived without it and without each other. Now the definition of motion cannot be that of a simple principle of simple being; division, duality, is necessary to it, and yet there is no necessity of the resultant parts (time and space) for each other. The necessity is, then, simply an illusory one, belonging to the understanding only. The understanding, therefore, is drawn into the same movement as that exhibited in the play of forces; a difference is stated, which is at the time no difference, and hence revoked. It thus experiences that this absolute movement is the law of the interior; that the force decomposes itself into two factors, and again, that these factors recombine themselves into a unity; in other words, that, in the nature of objects, 'there is necessary self-repulsion of the homonymous, and necessary attraction of the heteronymous. The force, the homonymous, places itself in a self-opposition, which appears as an absolute difference; but this difference is really none, since the homonymous repels *itself*, and, being identical with itself, necessarily re-attracts itself'.<sup>6</sup>

By this principle the quiet domain of the laws, the immediate image of the observed world, becomes its own counterpart. We have therein a second supersensual world, 'an inverted world', in the words of Hegel,

in which the difference or internal discussion of the interior becomes an immanent one. This supersensual world is an absolute self-antithesis, pure contradiction. As Hegel himself expresses it, 'This internal difference is to be apprehended as the self-repulsion of the homonymous, and its reversal, the equality of the unequal as the unequal, re-attraction of the heteronymous. In aspiring to the truth of objects, we must apprehend *abstract change*, pure contradiction. The contradictory is not one of two – for then it would be independent being – but the contradictory of a contradictory. Though I place the one contradictory (one term) here and other there, still, as I have the contradictory *as such*, each as its own antithesis, the *alterum* of itself.'

In short, we are inevitably driven to a unity *in* the opposition, to an identity *in* the difference – in other words, to an infinitude *in* the finite. Through this infinitude we see the law completed to a necessity in itself, i.e. we understand the transition of its unity into external variety, and conversely; and all the momenta, the phases of the phenomenon, are received in, reconciled with, the unity of the interior. The simple unity of the law is infinitude, i.e. according to what has been said, first, it is self-equality, and nevertheless absolute internal difference – the homogeneous repelling itself, the simple force becoming a duality; second, the factors of this duality appear as self-existing, independent, truly different; third, since they exist only as essentially different, as the contradictory of a contradictory, vitalized mutually as + and –, their nature is again unity and their duality annuls itself.

'This simple infinitude is the simple being of life, the soul of the world, the universal blood, which in its omnipresence is not disturbed by any contradiction, which comprises in its being all contradictions and their solution, which pulsates in itself without movement, and vibrates without disturbance.'

We have now arrived at the point where the *system* of Hegel takes its root – at this simple being, which is internally differential. The reader has a sufficient idea of Hegel's objective dialectics, which force every phase, meeting us at the first blush as permanent, into its very reverse, a palpable verification that it is *but* a phase, and affected with its own negation, with its counterpart. In the ensuing portions of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel, with the most trenchant acumen, dissolves the whole sphere of objectivity in this manner, so that the *Phenomenology* is, as it were, his *Philosophy* inverted. These investigations are of no immediate interest to us, because the same categories emerge in the body of the system itself.

## Hegel's Logic

### Quality

#### Being, naught and origination

The system of all science must germinate in the absolutely immediate, upon which all thought and existence are ultimately based. The first principle, the utterly indeterminate, from which all determinations proceed, is *pure being*. But pure, abstract, indeterminate being is identical with pure *naught*. Let those who demur at this endeavour to say in what the difference between pure being and pure naught consists. If there be difference, there is peculiarity, determination; and both are devoid of determination.

Being and naught are identical; nevertheless, in order to think them, we must keep them separate. We have here the first instance already of the identity supposing the difference, which appeared as the result of the Phenomenology. The identity of being and naught consists in their absolute transition into, their necessary evanescence in, each other; and this transition, their higher unity, is their truth.

Being and naught in mutual transition – *origination* and *evanescence* – form *existence*. Existence contains both (being and naught); it is *being with a determination, quality*. Origination is the unity of being and naught; but not a unity which *abstracts from*, but which *comprises* them both. Inasmuch, however, as being and naught are in the embrace of each other, neither of them is *as such*, i.e. being is not as being, and naught is not as naught. Selecting a familiar instance to illustrate this: a salt consists of an acid and a base; but in the salt the acid exists not as acid, nor the base as basic. They *are* in this unity, but as *annulled*, as *momenta*. From their conceived independence they degenerate, as it were, into mutual complements.

#### Existence

Taking being and naught according to their difference, each exists as a unity with the other. Origination contains them as two such unities – the one as immediate *being referred to naught*, the other as *naught referred to being*.

Naught received into being, so that the concrete whole is formally immediate, constitutes pure *determination*. This determination thus isolated is *quality*; and it is obviously twofold – determination in *the form of being, reality*, and determination in *the form of naught, negation*, which latter further determines itself as *limit*.

Existence, therefore, presents the twofold aspect of *reality* and *negation*. These are different from each other, and yet they are in identical unity; existence as such a unit constitutes *the existing thing*. In the existing

thing the simple self-relation is restored; it is a *negation of the negation*, a mediation with itself. The reality of existence identified itself with negation, and hence *became* negation; but this negation is nothing without its reference to the reality, without its *reannulment*, without a second negation; and the unity in this process is the existing thing.

Something *is*; it, moreover, *exists* and includes the process of origination. It is a transition, whose stages themselves exist; hence it *alters*. Maintaining itself, on the one hand, in its simple relation to itself, it is an existing thing as such; its negation likewise sustaining itself, on the other, it is its counterpart, its *alterum*. Every existing thing is consequently affected with this inherent antithesis: *being in itself* (*per se*, *an sich*), and *being for others*, for the 'without'. It *is* and is *determinate*.

Viewing this relation more closely, we find the thing and its counterpart, its *alterum*, coexisting; each acts as the negation of the other. Being for others is the negation of being in itself; but this negation of the latter is possible only if it be immanent therein;<sup>8</sup> the determination therefore also pertains to being in itself, constituting its peculiar quality, its *limit*.

Pure being, the pure relation to itself, then, forms the being *per se* in the existing thing; but not as an immediate self-equality, such as we conceive pure being, but as the not-being of its *alterum*, as existence reflected into itself. It is therefore, first, negative relation to its *alterum*; but second, it is affected by this *alterum* – the not-being of the same. In like manner, the *alterum* is first the negation of simple, self-related being; but it is not this negation as pure naught, but a negation *necessarily referring* to being in itself, as its own being reflected into itself.

Every existing thing necessarily refers to an *alterum*, to a counter-existing thing, as to its negation; but this negation is not an absolute one, but a negation of *something*; the negation *asserts* the something, therefore, in denying it. Being in itself, therefore, depends for its whole existence upon its being for others, the existing thing upon its *alterum*; and, conversely, the *alterum* owes its whole existence to its primary counterpart. *The existing thing and its alterum are consequently identical*. Each is thoroughly and essentially affected and determined by the other. Being in itself is inherently affected with its *alterum*, and herein lies its *definition*, which is distinct from its determination. In the words of Hegel, 'Definition is the affirmative determination as being in itself, to which a thing remains adequate in its existence in opposition to its complication with other things determining it – in virtue of which it maintains itself in its self-equality, even in its being for others.'

In the sphere of the qualitative, the differences maintain themselves even in their annulment; hence the repletion of the existing thing with determination is distinct from that determination itself, which appears only as being for others, and exhibits itself as *property*. The properties of a thing depend upon its implication with other things. This implication,

which as first sight seems accidental, is the necessary attribute of all finitudes.

The existing thing is the limit of the *alterum*, its negation, and thereby its own affirmation. This negation of the first negation is the being *per se* of the existing thing. The existing thing is the 'cessation of the *alterum* in it'; in other words, it is the limit to every thing without. It *is*, then, in its limit; at the same time, however, the limit is that where and what the thing *is not*. The limit, therefore, is the mediation through which a thing *is* and *is not*. Something *is* in its limit: it is the cessation of the *alterum* in it; it *is not* in the limit: it *ceases itself* in the *alterum*.

The quality of every existing thing which constitutes its limit determines the thing and makes it finite. Finite things exist only in virtue of their *negative* relation to themselves; 'they are, but the truth of this being is their end'. They pass away, not from any adventitious, external necessity, but from the laws of their own being. The nature of finite things is to contain the germ of destruction as their inmost being: 'the hour of their birth is the hour of their death'. Yet this evanescence is not absolute; their negation is a relative one; they vanish into a higher reality.

It has been said above that existing things, simply because their existence implies a negation, are finite in a twofold sense: they are *limited*, and subject to *alteration*. An acid, for instance, exists as an acid only by the negation of its opposite base; but the base is the negation of the acid. Obviously, then, the existence of the acid depends upon the negation of its own negation. It is thus, first, limited, and second, forced to destroy the relative finitude of its existence by combination with the base. Existing things, therefore, because their being is a necessary relation to their limit, are forced beyond themselves, beyond their limit, beyond their finitude. Their definition (as in the case cited, the acidity) consequently becomes at the same time their destination – that of transcending their finitude, of ultimately becoming infinite. The definition of the infinite is already implied in the foregoing results. The infinite is

- (1) The absolutely affirmative as the negation of the finite; but since
- (2) It *proceeds* from the negation of the finite, it enters into mutual relation with this, and as such is the abstract, defective infinite;
- (3) The self-annulment of the finite and infinite as *one* process is the true infinite.

- (1) We have seen that the finite contains in its nature a contradiction, which forces it to a negation of its own limits. The finite is being with a negation; the negation of this negation is the infinite, which latter is not therefore to be assumed, as in the usual views, as of *coordinate* existence with the finite, without reference to it. The infinite, on the contrary, is absolute being, which, after having limited itself in the finite, restores itself from that limitation. It



does not for this reason arise in an *abstraction* from everything finite, but the true nature of the finite is its infinitude, its absolutely affirmative determination.

- (2) The relation between the infinite and the finite is the following: the infinite, being the negation of the finite, is opposed to it as to its *alterum*, and the latter stands as the real existence of the former. As finite, however, this *alterum* contains the limit with the craving, the destination, to become infinite; and this craving satisfied is the infinite. The two, then, are inseparable; the finite is but the immediate origination of the infinite, and *vice versa*. The transition from the one to the other, from the infinite to the finite, and from the finite to the infinite, gives the so-called *infinite progress*. The connection between them is necessary, but appears as merely external in this progress.
- (3) Taking this union of the infinite and finite in its truth, we have the infinite properly so called. The finite is in its nature its own negation, and therefore includes the infinite; the infinite, conversely, is not as immediate, but as the negation of the finite, and consequently also affected by the latter. *Both, then, are the movement of returning to themselves through their negation*; they are both results, and in this movement identical. In this identity consists the true infinite. Once more I insist upon the precaution not to confound identity in its ordinary acceptation, in which the supposed difference, upon close inquiry, proves to have been only an apparent one, with this identity, which includes the difference. This will ever remain a mystery to those who have not seized upon the fundamental apperception that a contradiction of the *momenta* pointed out by the understanding pervades all existences. Everyone is prepared to admit, in case of necessity, that the finite exists not without mediation; but to predicate this mediation of the infinite, likewise, runs counter to all our habitual ideas. The *exclusion* of all mediation is usually considered as the very criterion of the infinite; and this is a prejudice of which we must divest ourselves. The infinite is not without the finite; it is, indeed, the negation of the finite, but in this negation the finite is indispensably expressed and contained.

## Notes

1 The host of ideas, anticipations, analogies etc., which every new and original aspect brings with it engendered, in Schelling and his disciples, a confidence in their genial intelligence, through which the eternal identity revealed itself, as they thought, spontaneously. This became, in time, the height of arrogance with many,

who imagined, according to a just observation, that they had simply to seat themselves on the philosophical tripod in order to speak oracles. Their dogmatical asseverations and their everlasting rhodomontades, dealt out *ex cathedra*, are often disgusting. I do not, of course, speak of the truly genial Schellingians, as Steffens, Troxler, Wagner, Klein etc.

2 There is question here merely of a certainty of the object as *being*, which is, in fact, all the senses pretend to furnish; not of the certainty respecting the qualitative *nature* of the object.

3 Compare the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, pp. 75, 76.

4 *ibid.*, p. 105.

5 I use the word 'Sensual' in preference to the word 'Sensuous' introduced by Coleridge and others, because the former is more idiomatic, and not here liable to become ambiguous.

6 *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 107.

7 *ibid.*, p. 121.

8 This relation must be clearly seen. One thing limits another, not merely in virtue of its extraneous coexistence with it, but because it was already in the nature of the other thing *to be limited*. The *craving* for the limiting thing was inherent in the limited one.

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**Extract from *Hegel's Logic: A Book on the Genesis of the Categories of the Mind* (1890)**

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W. T. Harris

**Hegel's pure thought – Trendelenburg's objections**

The Logic should begin according to Hegel with the most elementary pure thought and proceed to the highest and completest pure thought. It should begin with the simplest or first pure thought. Now, the question asked by the reader is: 'What is pure thought?' The formal answer is: pure thought is thought from which the entire content of experience has been excluded. This content may return into pure thought – that is to say, determinations may arise in pure thought – but it must never be found there as borrowed or received from experience; it must enter the system of pure thought solely because it has arisen in the self-determination of pure thought. In other words thought devoid of experience, active solely by itself and for itself, contemplating its own activity, may discover these determinations as arising within itself *a priori*, but it has no right to borrow them.

From this it is clear that the beginning of pure thought will have no predicate whatever that has arisen or can rise in experience. It will be utterly negative or indifferent as far as experience is concerned. If, however, it were the simple opposite of experience, or to be defined merely as the negative of experience, it would imply experience just as much as not-A logically implies A.

This first thought, in which nothing is borrowed from experience, is therefore the negation of all that can be found in experience, but it does not, in its form, state such negation or have any reference to experience. It is the first self-activity of reason affirming itself before it affirms, recognizes or identifies anything else.

The first self-affirmation of an infant's reason would, of course, be

unconscious. It would gradually arrive at consciousness through sense-perception. But sense-perception is, as I have shown in another place, an unconscious use of the three Aristotelian logical figures in the following order – second figure, first figure, third figure. The first act of perception recognizes the object and classifies it under an already known class in the logical form called the *second figure*; it then deduces by the *first figure* whatever is already known of the class as ‘anticipations of perception’ and verifies these by further observation. Then in the *third figure* it discovers new characteristics and divides the class into sub-classes. All this use of logical figures goes on in ordinary perception but is unconscious. When reflected upon, of course, it becomes conscious. In short the mind in perception moves, not from the individual to the general, but contrariwise, by determining the general and forming sub-classes out of larger classes by the use of the third figure, in which the object of perception is the middle term.

The first act of the mind whether in animals or in men is therefore an affirmation of self, but without reflection and hence without consciousness. This furnishes the first category – that of being: I am.

This simple self-assertion by which the most general category arises is not an abstraction or a negation, but the primordial affirmation with which mind begins. It is the foundation of further perception. For all perception is a further determination or particularization of the general category – being.

All experience is of particulars – special limitations in space and time. We do not sensuously perceive the absent and the past or future, but solely the now, the present to the senses. It must be here within the scope of perception, moreover, or else we do not perceive it. Here and now are points in space and time. All experience, then, is definite limitation of being, and being itself is not the content of experience.

Now if we take away from experience all its definite contents, all the special limitations and individualizing elements, we have left pure being in general, and nothing at all of experience remains. For pure being is only the pure potentiality or unlimited possibility of all perception, volition and thought, which the ego possesses. The ego is pure being as the ground of all its experience.

It is this view which makes Hegel say of Parmenides that his principle of pure being has great significance in the history of philosophy because it shows the first arrival of thought at a consciousness of itself in its purity. This view of its significance, too, leads Hegel to place pure being at the beginning of his logic as the first category. In the thought of pure being the mind frees itself from experience and seizes that thought which is the ground of experience and which makes experience possible. Now if any further determinations can be made and other categories reached by the mind itself without borrowing from experience, we may form a

list of categories which underlie experience and make it possible. In other words, we may discover and formulate the mind's contribution to experience.

The mind possesses at least pure being as its own, for there is not a vestige of experience in that category – all the results of experience are negations or limitations, or particularizations of being rather than affirmations of it.

To omit the specializations of being is to omit all that is derived from experience and to have left only in our minds what is furnished *a priori* as the condition of experience. To set up being as a first principle, or to worship Brahma as the supreme principle, is to transcend all experience – the former is a philosophic act; the latter a religious act having the same import.

In order to see how Hegel develops other ideas from this single *a priori* thought of pure being we must develop in another chapter what follows when we think of pure being and at the same time reflect on the thought of this thought. We then find in our thought of being also another determination *a priori* which we can and must add to it because it is a deeper and clearer idea unfolding directly from the idea of being itself; not a determination added to it by experience, but an idea unfolded from it deductively or analytically.

Here we must protest that the ordinary meaning of deduction does not serve our purpose – nor does the word 'analytically'. We might say with more truth perhaps 'synthetically', for the ideas that follow from reflecting on the pure thought of being are synthetic additions to being. It will be time enough to settle this question after we have in other chapters developed some of these ideas. Here, however, we must so far anticipate those developments as to use an example or two in order that we may consider the other side of this question of pure thought, to wit: the naming of the categories discovered.

Suppose that we grant that by thinking being we may discover *a priori* another determination, it is conceded that we must identify or recognize this second idea as one named in language and well known and valid in the history of human thought or else our deduction will seem idle and fanciful to us. Hegel named his second category naught (*Nichts*) and his third becoming (*Werden*). He did not invent new names for the thoughts which he saw originate from the thought of being. He recognized or identified these thoughts as those which experience had been using before. He used the names already familiar to experience in naming these ideas.

It must be evident that Hegel in this logic of pure thought cannot suppose himself to repudiate, altogether, experience. For he identifies these products of his dialectic, these pure thought categories, as the same with ideas long in use by the mind in its experience, and accordingly he gives them the old names being, naught, becoming, quality, quantity etc.

This naming proves that Hegel understands his logic to have two parallel lines of thought. One reflects upon the pure thought and discerns the determination implicit in being; the second line of thought compares this new determination with experience and discovers its identity with some category already used and named. Deriving thus the names of his dialectically discovered categories he shows the practical application of his logic to clearing up the problems of experience.

Thus there is a line of *a priori* thinking and a line of *a posteriori* thinking combined in one, in the logic. This has been taken for granted by Hegel without explicit mention. But the acutest critics of Hegel, like Trendelenburg, makes much ado over the discovery of this empirical element as though it entirely invalidated Hegel's claim to proceed by pure thought. Where did Hegel obtain these ideas of being, becoming, quality etc, but from experience, or else how does he apply to them these unfamiliar names? Still more, how is it that he uses all such familiar terms as 'process', 'movement', 'relation', 'sameness', 'difference' etc.? He evidently presupposes them as well known, and yet speaks of his system as not presupposing anything. Is being a 'presuppositionless beginning' when his logic assumes all these ideas as well known in order to describe its dialectic?

If a science of pure thought were to originate its language, it would indeed be 'presuppositionless' with a vengeance! Hegel did not anticipate such a misunderstanding of his views as Trendelenburg betrays by his criticism.

As philosophy undertakes to explain what is given in experience by deducing it from a necessary idea, it must present the ideas in two forms: (a) as they occur in ordinary knowledge (b) as they develop logically from pure thought. The names are, of course, found in ordinary knowledge. Moreover the ideas of ordinary knowledge are used constantly as predicates to describe what is recognized in the pure thought. Hegel recognizes a determination of pure thought as a 'process' or 'activity' or 'becoming' or 'quality', and describes it by those words. His dialectic is a perception of the logical presuppositions implied in a category of pure thought and the recognition of them as the same categories that had been functioning in experience before. The marshalling of experience and its categories is, of course, taken for granted. The *a priori* deduction of categories would have no meaning without this. The logic of pure thought deduces the logical genesis of what had before existed in ordinary knowledge. By this, logic demonstrates its utility. It shows itself as the Science of Knowledge. Omit all identifications of dialectic results with the results of experience and ordinary knowledge, and the explanation explains nothing to anybody. Moreover it is impossible to teach such a logic to others, because it would not translate any of its ideas into common ideas or into words current among men; any words it used to describe its pure thought

with would imply the ideas and words of ordinary knowledge. But according to Trendelenburg this would be inconsistent with the Hegelian claim to a dialectic of pure thought which proceeds without presuppositions. Hegel never foresaw this objection. Had he done so, he would have taken pains to show wherein his method used both pure thought and empirical results – finding the former in the nature of thought itself as purely *a priori*, and borrowing the other from ordinary knowledge for purposes of comparison, analysis and identification with the results of pure thought.

One should be very careful, however, to avoid the error of supposing that the expression 'in experience' means 'from experience' and that to find an idea in experience proves that the idea is derived from experience, or from external perception. On the contrary, all the ideas of pure thought enter experience from pure thought alone. They are furnished to experience by the unconscious activity of the mind during sense-perception and subsequent reflection.

The Hegelian logic thus has for its problem the explanation of that part of ordinary knowledge unconsciously added to it by the activity of thought itself.

To sum up this chapter:

1. There is at least one category of pure thought, namely, pure being.
2. Hegel's logic proposes to show that there is a system of more determinate pure thoughts logically flowing from reflection on being and the activity of thought implied in thinking it.
3. Such deduction in pure thought of new determinations is accompanied by comparison with experience and common knowledge with a view to identifying the ideas of pure thought with ideas previously known and named in experience.
4. Trendelenburg's criticism of Hegel's use of ordinary ideas and names as predicates of his pure-thought results is not justified; because such use does not prove that the pure-thought results are borrowed from common knowledge but only that pure thought deduces and thereby explains the ideas that are found in such ordinary knowledge.
5. To be found *in* experience does not prove derivation *from* experience. All that can be deduced from pure thought must have come into experience from pure thought and its unconscious action in sense-perception.

Next we must inquire what Hegel's logic knows in advance of its final result – whether Hegel blindly followed his method until it resulted in the last category, the Absolute Idea (*die absolute Idee*), or whether he obtained an insight into this highest category as the absolute first principle and then by its light discovered the inferior categories and the dialectic that exhibits their defects, refutes them, and shows the deeper ideas that underlie them.

